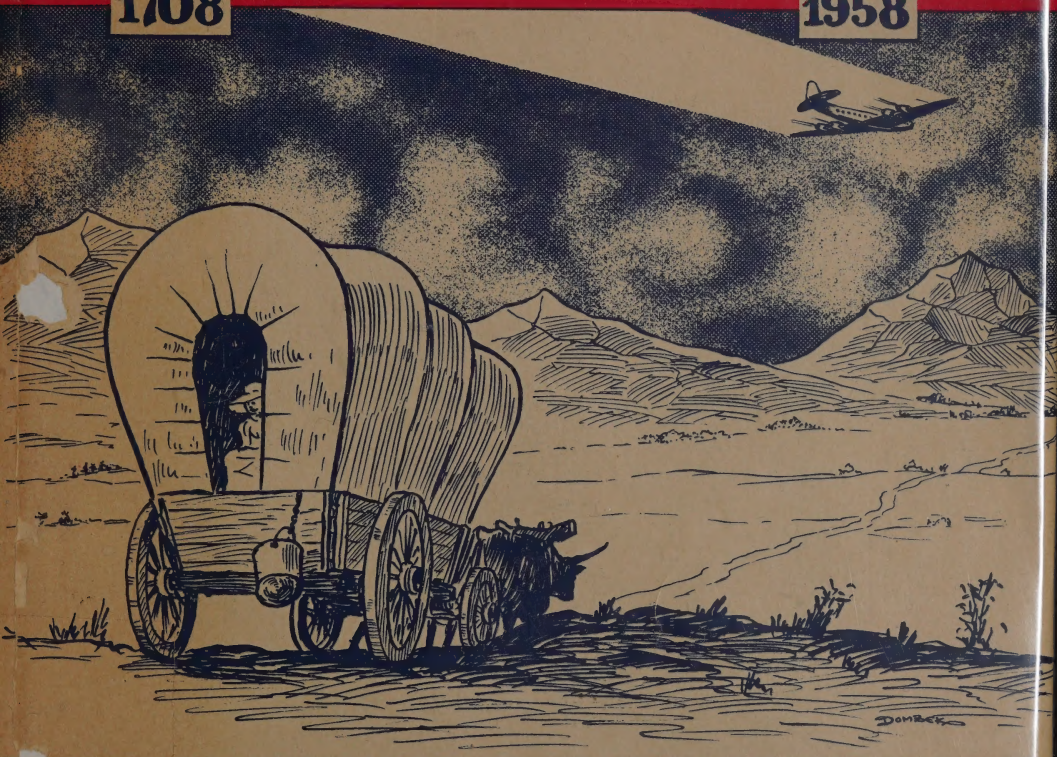


250 YEARS...

CONQUERING FRONTIERS

1708

1958



HOMER A. KENT, SR.

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250 YEARS ... CONQUERING FRONTIERS

BY H. A. KENT, SR.

- The author's aim has been to trace the history of The Brethren Church from before the period of the Reformation, down to the present day. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history, but rather to give the interesting highlights.

- This book contains over 50,000 words set in clear readable type, and every word revealing the power of God to accomplish His will and purpose through souls that are dedicated to serve Him.

- This book will supply the reader with factual data that is fully documented. This is a required text for all students of Church History in Grace Theological Seminary.

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A History of
The Eastern Church

**A History of
The Brethren Church**

250 YEARS . . .

Conquering Frontiers

A History of The Brethren Church

by

HOMER A. KENT, SR., Th. D.

Professor of Church History

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Winona Lake, Indiana

THE

BRETHREN MISSIONARY HERALD COMPANY

Winona Lake, Indiana

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DEDICATED

To

MY LOYAL AND DEVOTED WIFE
ALICE W. KENT

To

OUR TWO SONS IN THE MINISTRY
HOMER, JR. AND WENDELL

And To

MY STUDENTS OF CHURCH HISTORY

At

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Foreword

Since the publication of Henry R. Holsinger's work in 1901, there has been no comparable attempt by any competent scholar in The Brethren Church to bring the historical record up to date. The need for such a work has been underscored by the critical events which in 1937-1940 led to a division of local congregations of the denomination into two general conferences, both national in scope. It is with considerable satisfaction, therefore, that I find the need is now supplied in this volume written by my long-time friend and colleague, Dr. Homer A. Kent, Sr.

For those who know him, it will be acknowledged that Dr. Kent is eminently fitted, both by training and experience, for the task which he has undertaken. His early life was spent in The First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California, for many years the leading missionary church of the denomination. He is a graduate of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles; holds the B.A. degree from Ashland College, the Th.M. degree from Xenia Theological Seminary, and the Th.D. degree from Grace Theological Seminary. His appreciation for the painstaking methods of historical research was enhanced by archeological study in the Holy Land, under the joint auspices of Xenia Seminary and the American School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem. Fifteen years were spent as pastor of The First Brethren Church, of Washington, D. C., from which he was called in 1937 to the professorship of Church History in Grace Theological Seminary.

Dr. Kent's ministerial and academic career has extended through many of the events which he describes. Yet, in spite of his own strong convictions as revealed at decisive moments, he has been able to write his record with a commendable measure of that scholarly detachment which is the mark of the trained historian. This ability received signal recognition in the critical year of 1937 when he was offered, and strongly urged to accept,

a professorship at Ashland Theological Seminary. It is a pleasure to recommend his volume to members of The Brethren Church and also to the general public.

Alva J. McClain, Th.M., D.D., LL.D.
President of Grace Theological Seminary
Winona Lake, Indiana

Preface

The general aim of the author in this book is to present a short history of The Brethren Church from the time of its origin in Schwarzenau, Germany, in the year 1708 to the present time (1958). In the summer of 1958 our fraternity observed its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary with special recognition of the event, not only in Schwarzenau but in many Tunker churches in America also. It seems fitting therefore at such a time as this to review the history of our beloved church.

Not many histories have been written of our Brotherhood. None that have been written have brought the history up to date. Many things have happened since Holsinger's *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* came off the press in 1901. The latter is the only comprehensive work from the Progressive Brethren viewpoint that has been written, and it has long been out of print. The purpose of this writing is to include developments in the progressive branch of Tunkerism, which is The Brethren Church, since 1901.

The Ashland-Grace controversy which culminated in 1936-1939 will also be considered. The situation that developed following that controversy will be set forth, bringing the reader down to the present time.

The plan of the writing is not to make of it an exhaustive treatment. It is a *short* history setting forth the salient events of the church's development. Space settled upon as the proper length of this work will not permit much in the way of biographical sketches of the various leaders of the church as Holsinger and Brumbaugh have done in their splendid volumes. Neither will there be space for detailed descriptions of the various individual churches of the Brotherhood. Although such individuals and churches are interesting, they are essential to the main story only insofar as they made distinct contributions in shaping the destiny of the whole body.

Neither is there space for a lengthy discussion of kindred groups such as the Old Order German Baptists and the Moravian Brethren. We have tried to follow the main stream of Tunkerism as it has flowed from Germany to the United States, past the Ephrata movement, through the threefold division of 1881-1883, and on to the crisis that brought about the Ashland-Grace groups in The Brethren Church. This writer belongs to the National Fellowship of Brethren Churches and, of course, writes from that viewpoint. He seeks to present the facts faithfully and trusts that their treatment will be with profit to all readers.

A special word of appreciation and indebtedness is due to all the other men who have used their pens to set forth the history of The Brethren Church as they saw it from their vantage point. Without these efforts this work would not have been possible. The writer is also indebted to the Tunker publications, especially the *Brethren Evangelist* and the *Brethren Missionary Herald*, for valuable information needed to produce this work.

Since the writer has lived during the period of the Ashland-Grace controversy and has witnessed the unfortunate disturbances of those days, as well as the situation which has developed since then, perhaps he can add a bit in the way of historical presentation of the Brethren movement that will be interesting, authentic and helpful.

Homer A. Kent, Sr.

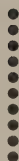
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The Origin of the Brethren Movement (1708)



1

The Brethren Church did not come into being by accident. It arose in Germany in response to a great spiritual need. Not all was well religiously in the land of Luther even after the Reformation had achieved its victory. The latter movement, under the leadership of Martin Luther and his associates, had done much toward establishing fundamental doctrine in the Protestant church. The Word of God had been restored to its rightful place of sole authority in matters of Christian doctrine and practice. Justification by faith was again emphasized as central in God's plan of salvation. The latter had all but been eclipsed by the works and ceremonies of men in the centuries immediately preceding. A stable foundation for spiritual growth had been laid by the reformers which was absolutely essential, for if there is not a good foundation, how can it be expected that there will be a substantial building?

This being said, it nevertheless remains sadly true that shortly after the Reformation there settled down upon the Protestant church a barren orthodoxy, a dead formalism, a cold indifference to spiritual things. Christian living was lacking in vitality and radiance. Passion for spiritual attainment had become chilled. The Reformation had failed to emphasize the practical side of Christianity. Justification by faith had been stressed, but sanctification of life had been neglected. Even Luther himself in his latter years deplored the lack of upright living in the church. Little place was given to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in daily experience. Constructive, expositional Bible teaching and preaching, though far superior

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to that of the Catholic priests, was neglected in many quarters. And, as might be expected in view of all this, missionary zeal was practically nonexistent in most places.

Be it further observed that after the yoke of Roman Catholicism had been thrown off, all sorts of religious organizations began to appear, and they became intolerant of each other until there followed the sorry spectacle of the Thirty Years War of 1618 to 1648, involving practically all of Europe. Finally, the Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648, which leagued together the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed churches into a new persecuting force. These three state churches, largely because of the futility experienced in fighting one another and the weariness and destructiveness of warfare, agreed to tolerate one another, to live and let live as far as they themselves were concerned, but they denied to all others the right to exist in the German Empire. The terms of the Treaty of Westphalia granted the princes of the several German provinces the right to choose which one of the three recognized churches should prevail in their respective provinces (*cujus regio, ejus religio*). When once a prince chose the church he desired to support, that church was expected to be the choice of all within his province. No other was to be tolerated. Nonconformists were not to be allowed. If found, persecution was to be their lot. Thus, though sometimes the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 is looked upon as the beginning of the modern denominational development with its allowance of religious liberty, there remained yet much to be desired in the latter respect. There was religious liberty only within definitely described limits. Beyond these limits one did not dare to go without endangering his very life in many instances.

The various princes accepted the terms of the treaty, with the exception of Prince Henry of the province of Wittgenstein in western Germany, who became a friend of those who in one way or another dissented from the viewpoint of the three state churches. It is said that his daughters were Pietists and thus exerted a definite influence upon their father in the way of granting religious liberty. At any rate, he allowed full reli-

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gious freedom to all refugees who sought asylum within his territory. This explains why many religious dissenters congregated in the vicinity of Schwarzenau at the time of the birth of the Tunker movement.

In this region many Pietists, Anabaptists, Mystics, and others gathered for religious freedom. It became the center for the discussion and the study of matters relating to simple New Testament church doctrine and practice. As time went on Prince Henry's popularity, owing to his liberal attitude, aroused the jealousy of the other princes because of the loss of substantial portions of their constituency, and they decreed that he must choose his church as they themselves had done and must make this church the sole church of his realm. Hence this favored province was closed against dissenters and persecutions began, the severity of which rose to great height after the death of Henry.

In this sheltered vicinity before persecution began to be felt, Alexander Mack (1679-1735), who is usually considered to be the founder of The Brethren Church, and others of kindred spirit met together for prayer and Bible study. An outstanding companion of Alexander Mack during these days was Ernst Christoph Hochman, a Pietistic preacher of the best sort, who exerted a great influence upon Mack. They traveled together over many parts of Germany, especially up and down the Rhine Valley, holding evangelistic meetings in which they strove to give out the Word of God in all of its purity and devotional fervor. Both of these men were powerful preachers, men of wealth and culture, men who loved the Lord and who wanted to see His Word accepted in its purity and simplicity. Hochman and Mack saw eye to eye in spiritual matters. Hochman had been connected with the Lutheran church and Mack with the Reformed, or Presbyterian, but both had ceased to be in accord with their mother churches and strove for a fuller life of the Spirit.

A reading of a confession of faith prepared by Hochman as a condition of his being released from prison in 1702 at Detmold reveals that in faith he was in complete harmony with

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Mack. J. S. Flory, in his *Literary Activity of the Brethren in the Eighteenth Century*, says that this document, next to the Bible, was the most important influence that led to the organization of the German Baptist or Dunker Church.¹ However, it is apparent that Hochman did not agree with Mack on such matters as church organization and the ordinances of God's house. Hochman held to the viewpoint of most of the Pietists that these things are of minor importance. Mack, however, was anxious to organize a congregation in which the ordinances of God's house could be observed. He also observed the words of Matthew, chapter 18:15-17, to the effect that the disciplinary action outlined there demands a church organization to make it operate. This difference of viewpoint led eventually to separation and painful regrets on the part of both men.

Some there are who think that Hochman finally accepted Mack's viewpoint, was immersed at Schwarzenau by Mack, and joined The Brethren Church after its organization, but the evidence is not conclusive. If he did not become a member, he at least became closely identified with the first members and loved their fellowship. So closely identified with them was he that Mack's son, long years afterwards, refers to him as "Brother Hochmann von Hoehenau."²

However this may be, we know that Mack and his followers continued in their search of the Scriptures to find the will of God in order that they might chart their future course. Deep convictions laid hold upon their hearts. They determined to make the New Testament in its entirety their rule of faith and practice. Thus it is satisfying to realize that The Brethren Church had its origin in the atmosphere of Bible study. Its founders pored over its open pages to find exactly what it had to say and they were brave enough to be willing to abide by its teachings, come what may.

¹ John S. Flory, *Literary Activity of the German Baptist Brethren in the Eighteenth Century* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1908), p. 5.

² Martin Grove Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (2d ed.; Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1910), p. 25.

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Alexander Mack clearly saw that he could not be satisfied to remain simply an associate of the Pietists of his day, good and earnest as many of these people were. Their views were too varied. They were not definite enough in respect to doctrine. Some of them believed in infant baptism, which he could not accept. Some of them had no use for church organization, which he felt to be a necessity. Some of them had no use for the ordinances of the church, which he was coming to see were of great importance.

The studies of Mack and his associates led them to believe that trine immersion was the proper mode of baptism as presented in the New Testament. They studied Matthew 18 carefully and found the teaching of church discipline plainly set forth. This was being neglected almost universally with the most shocking results in moral laxity to be seen throughout the Empire. Mack and his friends, while studying carefully their New Testaments, together with the religious situation in Germany, after much thought and prayer decided to form a new religious group at Schwarzenau. In the words of Martin G. Brumbaugh:

It will be seen that the new congregation at Schwarzenau studied all denominations; knew all shades of faith and then turned from Ecclesiasticism and Pietism alike to carve out a new and distinct order of faith and practice. They were debtors to all and followers of none.³

These pioneers of our Brotherhood were convinced that man-made creeds, all too prevalent in their day, should give way to adherence to "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." They felt that only in this manner could they emerge from the religious chaos of their times and arrive at the New Testament ideal which to them was the only divinely approved way.

Consequently, in the year 1708, at Schwarzenau, Germany, straight east of the present city of Cologne, on the Eider River, The Brethren Church came into being. There were eight individuals, five men and three women, who took part

³ *Ibid.*, p. 10f.

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in the first baptismal service and thus became the charter members of our beloved fraternity. These "eight persons entered into a covenant with each other, by the help of God to endeavor to attain to the answer of a good conscience by rendering obedience to all the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and follow Him as their good shepherd and leader through good and evil report."⁴ The exact day when the original baptisms took place remains unknown nor do we know who was the first baptizer. These humble folk did not want their followers to worship a day or a man. We are only told that—

they went out in the morning to a stream called Aeder, and there upon whom the lot had fallen baptized the brother who had discovered so great anxiety to submit to that ordinance (Alexander Mack); this being done, he was now acknowledged as duly qualified. He baptized him first by whom he had been baptized, and the remaining three brethren and three sisters. Thus were these eight, at an early hour in the morning, baptized in the water by trine immersion; and after they came up out of the water and had changed their clothes, they were filled with joy, and by the grace of God this expression was revived in their minds with peculiar energy: "Be ye fruitful and multiply." This is recorded to have occurred in the before-mentioned year without reference to month or day.⁵

What room for the imagination to play in these significant words! Schwarzenau means black meadow, which suggests the fertility of the peaceful valley in which it is located.

The present-day traveler who passes through this tidy little town of about one thousand souls is interested to see a modern school which was erected in 1956 with the following designation boldly inscribed on its facade, *Alexander Mack Schule*. Thus graphically there is preserved the name of the man, in the place of his greatest endeavor, who had so much to do with the founding of The Brethren Church. The Church of the Brethren by contributing to the cost of the structure was privileged to have this name given to the school.

⁴ George N. Falkenstein, *History of the German Baptist Brethren Church* (Lancaster, Pa.: New Era Publishing Co., 1901), p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

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Surely for Brethren folk all down the succeeding years there has been a rich blessing in contemplating what our humble forefathers in the faith accomplished in yonder place. Some tremendous lessons have been bequeathed to us from their experience. Why was not the exact date of this occurrence and the name of the first baptizer left to us? These folk were not concerned about exalting days and men. They were concerned only with pleasing God. How many were present for the occasion? They did not leave this on record, for they were not concerned with statistics and publicity.

Henry Holsinger is probably right in thinking that this first memorable service was solemnized in the presence of only a few spectators. Otherwise it is difficult to imagine how the secrecy mentioned above could have been kept. Brumbaugh, however, says that as this first baptism was observed they were "surrounded by many curious witnesses."⁶ Be that as it may, we do know that the first baptizer was chosen by lot. Whoever he was upon whom the lot fell, this brother administered the sacred rite to Alexander Mack, who in turn performed the rite upon the first baptizer and the other six members of this first group. It is worthy of notice that the Scripture read upon this occasion was Luke 14:25-33, which includes the matter of counting the cost before entering upon Christian service. This passage was altogether fitting. These eight pioneers had counted the cost carefully. They knew the persecutions to which they would likely be subjected in their venture of faith. But they were willing to pay the price necessary to the establishment of the new testimony. The above passage was always used in Germany in connection with Brethren baptisms. The sentiment of this Scripture was so strong among these pioneers that

Alexander Mack composed the first hymn for the church based upon this text and beginning—"Count the cost, says Jesus."

This hymn was sung for many years at every baptismal scene connected with the Church.⁷

⁶ Brumbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁷ Martin Grove Brumbaugh, "The Church in the Fatherland," *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing Co., 1908), p. 18.

Following this initial service of baptism, the group assembled for confirmation and devotion. They experienced a wonderful inward blessing which assured them that they were in the path of the divine will. A deep, settled peace flooded their hearts. Thus a new denomination had embarked upon its course. As mighty oaks from little acorns grow, so we are to see in the pages that follow what wide-spreading influences were to radiate from this little group that obeyed their Lord on the banks of the Eder.

Because of their significance as founders of this new movement, the names of the eight original members of The Brethren Church deserve a place at the conclusion of this chapter and in the hearts of all Brethren people. These names (though in all cases the same persons) appear in slightly different forms and spelling, according to which source is chosen. The names as they are given by Alexander Mack in his *A Plain View of the Rites and Ordinances of the House of God* are as follows: Alexander Mack, Anna Margareta Mack, Joanna Noethiger (or Bony), Andrew Bony, George Grebi, Lucas Vetter, John Kipping, and Joanna Kipping. They were all members of a Protestant church before 1708. Kipping was a Lutheran. Mack, Vetter, Bony, and Grebi were Presbyterians or Reformed.*

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* Reproduced by Brumbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 30f.

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2

• *Twenty-one Years* • *in Europe* • *(1708-1729)* •

The newly organized group of Brethren were now ready to embark upon twenty-one eventful years of activity in Europe before they would be forced to seek a homeland elsewhere. Blessing and prosperity followed the humble efforts of these earnest folk. They felt a strong urge to make known abroad the message which had so gripped their own hearts. The words of God to Noah, "Be fruitful and multiply," seemed to come to them at the very beginning with a definite spiritual application. An earnest missionary spirit prevailed among them in those early days which was an indication that the movement was of God. Their enthusiasm spread from town to town. Steadily new members were added to the group. It is good to contemplate the fact that The Brethren Church was born with a missionary passion.

In a short while, that is by 1715, a numerous congregation was established at Schwarzenau. From this place many scattered to other parts of Germany and other churches were started. There was a congregation established at Marienborn, a place northeast of Schwarzenau, to which interested folk from the Palatinate attached themselves. This establishment occurred soon after 1708, indicating the rapidity of the movement. There was also a congregation of Brethren located at Epstein. Persecution often attended the efforts of the scattered members to establish themselves because of the attitude of the three state churches as noted in the previous chapter. Thus at Marienborn and Epstein there was such a frowning upon the new congregations that they were driven out as exiles but found

TWENTY-ONE YEARS IN EUROPE

refuge at Creyfelt, a rather important place on the Rhine River north of Cologne.

Creyfelt became the second most important place in the history of the Brethren in Europe. Here were located such distinguished Brethren leaders as John Naas, Christian Libe, Stephen Koch, and Peter Becker, all of whom we shall meet later in our story. At this city there were many Mennonites also, and in their meeting house, tradition says, the Brethren held some of their meetings. It is very likely that it was at this place that William Penn on some of his tours of the mainland contacted the Brethren and gave them an invitation to come to the new land in America. At any rate, as we shall see later, when persecutions and internal troubles arose in Creyfelt, a large group of the Brethren left this place and came to William Penn's realm in America. There is evidence that the Brethren also found refuge in such places as Prussia, Holland, and Switzerland in those turbulent days.

The life of the Brethren in those pioneer days must have been very simple. From all indications they did not possess church buildings of their own. Because of the unsettled conditions of the time and the persecutions to which they were subjected, it was scarcely possible for them to engage in church building programs. They probably worshiped in private homes, barns, and other available places which were open to them. As indicated above, the Brethren at Creyfelt at times worshiped in the meeting house of the Mennonites. In these respects they were much like the Brethren who first came to America, who for a good many years built no church buildings but worshiped in the homes of their constituency. In both instances the Brethren relived the experience of many New Testament believers who worshiped in "the church in thy house."¹ There is no record of church conferences in those days. No minutes of church meetings are preserved for us. Apparently they felt no need for these things and were concerned about other matters. The numerical strength of the Brethren in Europe will probably never be known. It is evident that they were quite

¹ Philemon 2.

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numerous. One has said: "We are safe to say that the original eight in twenty years grew to one thousand from 1708 to 1728."² The largest list yet made consists of 255 names, but quite likely this is only a fraction of the whole number. The list of names just referred to appears in M. G. Brumbaugh's *History of the Brethren*, chapter 5. With respect to this list Brumbaugh says:

After an exhaustive search I have been able to secure a fairly large list of members in the European congregations. This list is by no means complete, but it is vastly more complete than any list yet given to the public, and will not be without value and interest to those whose hearts warm towards the first members of the Church of the Brethren and whose spirits are athirst for the truth.³

In this list arranged alphabetically appear such common Brethren names as Becker, Dieter, Eckerlin, Flickinger, Frantz, Gansz, Gomerry, Grebi, Hacker, Hendrickson, Holzapple, Hochmann, Kalb, Mack, Miller, Price, Traut, and Vetter, with a few pertinent facts concerning each name.⁴

By what name was this group of early pioneers known? According to J. L. Gillin and others, the name which they preferred among themselves was that of Brethren. Desiring to adhere strictly to New Testament teaching and principles, what better name could they adopt than this which was so in harmony with the believer's relationship to Christ and to one another? It is stated in the Book of Matthew: "One is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."⁵ Though they preferred this name to all others, there is no record that they officially adopted it.

There were a number of other names by which these folk were often called, sometimes in derision and sometimes not. They were called Tunkers because of their insistence upon

² T. T. Myers, *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1908), p. 39.

³ Martin G. Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1910), p. 52f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-70.

⁵ *Matthew* 23:8.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS IN EUROPE

immersion as the only method of baptism. The word comes from the German *tunker* (or *dunker*) which means to dip or immerse. The Brethren were dippers in the practice of baptism. The term Tunkard is similarly applied to these people, but it is incorrect since the suffix "ard" is from the French and always carries with it the idea of contempt, such as drunkard and laggard. The title Dunkers is similar to Tunkers, but the form Dunkards ought not to be used. Falkenstein comments that it should be used by only two classes of people: the first, those who are either too ignorant to know or do not care for the laws of language; and, secondly, by those who do know and want to use it with its true meaning of contempt. Like Tunkard, Dunkard is a hybrid and therefore should not be used by anyone who desires good English.^o

Sometimes these folk were called Dompelaers because of the forward action in baptism. They were also called Anabaptists because they belonged to that large class of individuals in those times who rejected infant baptism and for the most part practiced immersion. The word Taufers as used of them is similar in connotation to Tunkers. Some called them Schwarzenau Baptists, Wittgenstein Baptists, Gospellers, or New Baptists. They have sometimes been called Mystics, but if this name applies to them it is only in the best sense. Any mysticism that characterized them was based solely upon the Word of God and did not lean toward the prevalent pantheism of the middle ages. By whatever name they were known, they were a Bible-loving, Bible-living, Bible-preaching group of people, utterly sincere in their stand for the simplicity of the Gospel. To multitudes who looked at them from the outside, they appeared to be fanatical, but they did not mean to be so. They simply desired to live by the Word of God as a careful study of its pages had showed them they ought to live. They sought to imitate New Testament Christianity.

Almost from the beginning trouble marked the brief course of the Brethren in Europe. There were troubles foisted upon

^o George N. Falkenstein, *History of the German Baptist Brethren Church* (Lancaster, Pa.: The New Era Printing Co., 1901), pp. 11-12.

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them from the outside. Then there were troubles which arose from within their ranks. The trouble from the outside took different forms. There was definite persecution with accompanying banishment that resulted from being out of harmony with the state churches—Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed. There was the case of John Naas (1669-1741), one of the ablest men in the church in Europe, probably next to Alexander Mack in influence, a man of commanding figure. In the year 1715, in company with Jacob Priesz, he was traveling through the country from Creyfelt to Marienborn and Epstein, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. At this time Creyfelt was under the King of Prussia. The king's recruiting officers were canvassing the country seeking recruits for the Prussian army. Everyone of physical ability was compelled to enter the service.

The king was especially anxious to secure men of tall and commanding physique for his own bodyguard. Being such a man, John Naas was seized and urged to enlist. He refused as one whose religious convictions forbade him to engage in carnal strife. As a result he was tortured by pinching and thumbscrewing. But still he refused. They then hung him up with a heavy cord by his left thumb and great right toe. Still he did not recant. Finally, not wishing to kill him, they cut him down and forced him into the presence of the king who was told of his stubborn refusal to enlist in the king's service. When questioned by the king as to why he refused to enlist, he responded nobly thus: "Because I cannot, as I have long ago enlisted in the noblest and best army; and I cannot become a traitor to my King." When the ruler observed the conviction and tenacity of purpose of Naas, he handed him a gold coin as a reward for his fidelity and released him.

There was the case of Christian Libe who was apprehended and compelled to serve at the galleys on board one of the ships, being coupled with ungodly miscreants. However, he was finally released after four years of slavish toil and returned to his home.

Some of the members of the church were robbed of their property but submitted joyfully. Others endured bonds and

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imprisonment, some for a short period of time, others for several years. Members were driven from one place to another so that the same persons are frequently found in several congregations at approximately the same time. At times whole congregations were driven out and went almost bodily to a new location. This was the case in 1715 when the church at Marienborn fled for protection to Creyfelt. Again in 1720, following the death of the friendly count, the Schwarzenau congregation found life intolerable in their original home and the whole body of members escaped into West Friesland. To show that such persecution at Schwarzenau was undeserved, we have a most interesting state document from the governor of the Schwarzenau district in 1720, written as an official report to the Imperial Treasurer to the effect that

for a while pious people have been living here, of whom we never heard anything evil. They kept themselves very quiet and retired and no man ever made any complaint of them. Lately forty families of them, about 200 persons, have moved out of the country.⁷

From such selected citations it will be readily seen that it cost the Brethren forefathers something to stand by their convictions in those early days.

Then there was another type of opposition from without which these early Brethren had to face. Certain learned men sought to confuse the Brethren with subtle questions. Upon one occasion forty such questions were submitted by a group headed by one Eberhard Ludwig Gruber to "the New Baptists of Witgenstein." These questions were answered so carefully and with such sagacity by Alexander Mack that the work was published for the enlightenment of those who were seekers after the truth. It became one of two printed works from the pen of Alexander Mack and was called "Ground Searching Questions." The other work was called "A Plain View of the Rites and Ordinances of the House of God." Both of these works appeared in 1713. These two tracts serve to give an insight into the beliefs and practices of the early Tunkers.

⁷ John S. Flory, *Literary Activity of the German Baptist Brethren in the Eighteenth Century* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1910), p. 24.

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There has been much discussion with respect to Mack's answers to Gruber's forty questions, especially with respect to the place of baptism in the church. Sometimes Mack's answers appear a bit evasive and unsatisfactory, but it should be remembered that these answers were first given to enemies of their viewpoint and no more was told than was necessary. Usually folks do not pour out their hearts in fullest commitment to their enemies. Sometimes undue emphasis appears to be placed upon obedience in the realm of Christian experience. In fact, J. L. Gillin (b. 1871), a Brethren educator, went so far as to say that "Obedience is the Alpha and the Omega of Mack's thought."⁸ But it should be remembered that these folk were living in a day when the practical side of Christianity was being neglected.

The Reformation had emphasized doctrine with stress upon justification by faith but had been deficient when it came to the walk of the Christian. It appears to the writer that Mack's idea was to show that "faith without works is dead," that full orbed Christianity includes a life that is in harmony with one's profession. Mack could not conceive of a person being a true Christian and lacking in obedience to the Lord's will. Faith must express itself in practice. Sometimes, if one reads an isolated statement or two in Mack's answers, one is not certain whether he held that baptism is essential to salvation or only to obedience. At other times his answers are altogether convincing and satisfying.

A number of statements appear which make it clear that Mack did not believe in baptismal regeneration. Let me illustrate. In answer to question 12, in speaking of the relation of faith to baptism, he says: "Had Christ connected salvation with baptism, then men would have been eager to receive baptism and retain their self-will and carnal mind, as Antichrist does, and attribute their salvation to the water, and continue on in their sinful lives."⁹ The clear inference here is that there is no vital

⁸ John L. Gillin, *The Dunkers, a Sociological Interpretation* (New York: 1906), p. 29.

⁹ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 59.

connection between salvation and baptism. In answer to question 19 Mack says: "Salvation is not in the water, but alone through faith which worketh obedience through love."¹⁰

The clear inference here is that baptism in no wise brings salvation, but a saved man will obey Christ and be baptized. Mack's viewpoint is well expressed in answer to question 20, where he says:

We do not regard baptism of any more importance than the Scriptures have given it; and since the Word of God commands that those who believe shall be baptized, we regard it as an act of disobedience to refuse or oppose that which God has commanded. And whoever will oppose God, even in so small a matter as water baptism, must expect to be punished for his disobedience.¹¹

Here Mack simply states that true believers will want to obey their Lord even in "so small a matter as baptism." Surely this is not baptismal regeneration. Again, in answer to question 21, he says:

We have already plainly declared that we do not expect to merit salvation by works, but alone through faith in Christ, which faith must have works of obedience in order that it may be saving faith.¹²

Mack here expresses again the viewpoint of James, who saw works as the true manifestation of faith. Neither are to abide alone.

One weakness of Martin Luther was his failure to see clearly the relation between faith and works or obedience; hence he spoke of the Epistle of James as "a right strawy epistle." We think Alexander Mack had a more balanced theological viewpoint than did Luther on this point. Henry Holsinger includes these questions and answers in their entirety in his *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church*, Chapter 4. A careful perusal of Mack's answers to these questions, as well as of his other utterances, will no doubt impress the reader with his breadth of knowledge and deep convictions. He may also be

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

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led to believe that he lacked somewhat in a fully matured and systematic comprehension of such subjects as God's grace, eschatology, including dispensational truth, the distinction between Israel and the church, and the matter of future judgment of the wicked. However, there is no question as to his belief in the inspiration of the whole Word of God and salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer does not believe it is true to attribute to him belief in baptismal regeneration.

Not only did these early Brethren experience trouble from without, but it is evident that Satan sought to disrupt and discourage the infant group from within. In 1717 the Creyfelt congregation was thrown into confusion due to the unfortunate experiences gathered about a young man by the name of Hacker (or Hoecker), whose first name has not been left to us.

Young Hacker was a minister on the staff of the Creyfelt congregation which had such able men as John Naas and Christian Libe as elders, and an active body of younger ministers such as Peter Becker, Stephen Koch, Henry Holzapple, John Henry Traut, and Henry Kalckglasser, in addition to Hacker. With this numerous group of leaders it appears that Hacker was not needed for ministry as much as he may have liked. At any rate, he became employed to preach for the congregation of Mennonites in the city. He was well educated, a good speaker, and a man of fine personality and Christian character. For his services the Mennonites paid him at the rate of \$250 per year; thus he may be considered as the first minister on salary in The Brethren Church (for he was still a Brethren). And this was in the day when the Brethren did not believe in a paid ministry.

In the Mennonite congregation which Hacker served, there was a merchant who was also a minister but who preferred to devote his talents to business rather than to preaching. Hacker visited this home occasionally, more and more as time went on, since the merchant had an attractive daughter in whom he became interested. The two fell in love and were married, with the father of the bride performing the ceremony.

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The proceedings created a storm of protest in the Creyfelt church. Hacker had married outside the church! The matter was investigated. Sentiment with regard to the matter was divided. One group led by Elder Naas, Peter Becker, and some of the other leaders was in favor of dealing gently with the young man. But the other group led by Elder Libe was against any leniency and advocated stern discipline. Much excitement ensued and harsh words were spoken.

Libe exercised such influence against Hacker in the congregation that they succeeded in passing a motion to expel Hacker from the church. The result was a divided church. Other meetings were held to try to rectify the matter, but things only became worse. Irreparable damage was done. Hacker himself was sorely grieved at his expulsion and finally took sick and died worrying over the matter. Elder Naas became so disheartened because of the action and its result that he left Creyfelt and was inactive in the work of the ministry for some years until Peter Becker persuaded him to come to America. And Elder Libe also became inactive in the ministry and finally left it altogether, entering business instead, and married out of the church.

Thus with this sad situation in Creyfelt and the removal of the Schwarzenau group to Holland in 1720, where it remained until 1729, the curtain falls upon the life and labors of the Brethren in Europe in the early eighteenth century. The infant denomination was to be thrust out of its nest wherein it was born to find opportunity for development and growth in a happier clime.

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Brethren,
Westward Ho!
(1719-1729)

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Our last chapter closed with the falling of the curtain upon the experiences of the Brethren in Europe. We turn our attention now to the emigration of these people to America. Connected with this emigration there were two distinct waves that composed it, the first in the year 1719, and the other in the year 1729. Besides these there were isolated cases of individual Brethren wending their way to America. In this emigration of the Brethren to the friendly shores of the American continent we have "the unique example in history of the emigration of an entire religious denomination."¹ This factor speaks eloquently for the unity of purpose and conviction which these people possessed in spite of certain differences which had tended to molest this unity, especially at Creyfelt, as we have already seen.

Falkenstein's statement quoted above, however, appears a bit exaggerated, for certainly there were some Brethren who became scattered in the countries round about Germany, as well as in Germany itself, and who did not cross the Atlantic for the purpose of obtaining religious liberty. For example, there is a group in Denmark and nearby areas today calling themselves *The Assembly of Christ* (Christi Menighed) who claim by evidence difficult to refute to have descended from the original eight members of the Tunker church at Schwarzenau, Germany. They affirm that two brothers from Schwarzenau, Simon and Soren Bolle, left the latter place about the year

¹ George N. Falkenstein, *History of the German Baptist Brethren Church* (Lancaster, Pa.: The New Era Printing Co., 1901), p. 27.

1737 and went to Denmark. There they preached the Gospel with the result that at the present time there are several assemblies of Brethren in that land and a few groups in Norway, Sweden, and North Germany with a total membership of about 185. They have an organization and hold an annual conference. They appear to have much the same heritage and doctrinal viewpoint as the Brethren of the National Fellowship whose conference they contacted in 1956 by a letter of greeting from their leading pastor, E. J. P. Hansen. This letter expressed an earnest desire for a better acquaintance between the two groups.

During the summer of 1957 two Brethren missionaries, P. Fredrick Fogle and Donald Hocking, attended and participated in the annual conference of *The Assembly of Christ* held at Gentofte, a suburb of Copenhagen, Denmark. In carefully written reports to the office of the Foreign Missionary Society, they indicate a definite connection of these folk with the original Brethren of Schwarzenau, a similarity of evangelical belief and of practice common to the Brethren. At two points there appears a divergence in doctrine. The Denmark brethren stress the gifts of prophesy and of speaking in tongues for the present age though not in an extreme manner. However, they hold fast to the authority of the Word of God and have a similar motto to that of the National Fellowship of Brethren Churches; namely, "We speak when the Bible speaks, and we are silent when the Bible is silent." There is apparently no connection between these folk and the Danish Brethren Mission which is discussed by Holsinger in his history on pages 166-170 and founded mainly by Christian Hope about 1877. This latter work will be referred to later in this work.

Doubtless there were a few other groups, now lost to history, who became scattered across Europe because of the difficulties of the times. In the main, however, it is certainly true that in the years of 1719 and 1729 and thereabouts the most of the Brethren body moved to the New World.

The reason why the Brethren looked toward America is easy to determine in the light of the situation in which they found themselves and of the beckoning hand of the New World.

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Soon after the little group came into being at Schwarzenau persecution began to hound them. Being a church of protest and in the minority, the Brethren found themselves in disfavor wherever they settled. Some grew discouraged and drifted away from the church or back into the state churches. However, a goodly group of brave souls had "counted the cost" and were determined to remain true to their convictions and pay the price, no matter what it entailed. It became increasingly evident that the possibility of establishing themselves in Europe and prospering there was well-nigh impossible. And so, with a remarkable unity, they decided to move westward, willing to endure the heartbreak of permanent separation from their homeland.

It was America that offered the most hope of success in their venture. William Penn was granting full religious liberty to all who would come to his territory in the New World. He had received the grant of territory now called the State of Pennsylvania from the crown of England. He was anxious to have thrifty people like the Brethren, the Mennonites, the Quakers, and the Pietists come to his domain and develop it. In 1677 Penn made a journey to Europe to enlist as many as possible to avail themselves of the liberty and economic advantages to be found in his colony.

Gillin states that "from 1683 he and his agents were at work in the state along the Rhine advertizing the religious freedom of his colony."² He saw in these people the qualities of stability, thriftiness, and dependability which even to the present time characterize the native German population. William Warren Sweet states that "William Penn and his associates were generous in inviting other persecuted *radicals* (italics not in original) such as Mennonites, Dunkers, Moravians, and the Schwenkfelders to come to their colonies."³

² John L. Gillin, *The Dunkers, A Sociological Interpretation* (New York: 1906), p. 27.

³ William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1939), p. 3.

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When they faced this impossible situation in Europe and had a definite invitation to come to the New World with its vast opportunities, their course of action seemed clear. It was to America that they must go. It beckoned to them as their Promised Land.

Neither was there indecision as to where they should go upon arrival in America. They were already acquainted with a place called Germantown, not far from Philadelphia. This village had been settled by Mennonites in 1685, some of whom had gone from Creyfelt and had been friends of the Brethren. There had been an exchange of greetings from time to time from the two places, and glowing reports had been given by the inhabitants of Germantown as to the joys and opportunities of the New World. As the Brethren pioneers left the unfriendly shores of Europe, they doubtless had communications from friends in Germantown in their pockets. Their eyes and hopes were centered upon that place which was destined to become the focal point of Brethren history for the first hundred years of their existence in this country.

The first wave of Brethren emigration from Europe came from Creyfelt. The year following the unfortunate Hacker affair which centered in the church at that place, Peter Becker (1687-1758) organized a body of those who had been grieved, and prepared to come to America. It appears that there were 126 members in this party, including approximately twenty families. This movement practically sounded the death knell to the Creyfelt congregation in Germany. "A pall fell upon the church. Members lost interest, wandered away, or drifted back into the world, and the church dwindled and finally ceased operations."⁴ Thus this phase of the Brethren movement in Germany ended on a sad note due to the spirit of intolerance and self-will which was much too dominant among many of the Creyfelt members.

Peter Becker, who was called upon to be the leader of the first wave of emigration, appears to have been a happy choice.

⁴ John S. Flory, *Flashlights from History* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1932), p. 17.

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He was a man of devout character, dependable, and of considerable ability. Brumbaugh says of him:

He was perhaps the most gifted singer and the most eloquent man in prayer in the colonial church. He was not an effective speaker, but he was of sound judgment, great moderation, and sufficient tact to manage successfully the mighty burdens laid upon him.⁵

The details of the first emigration are very meager. The year was 1719. They probably started late in the spring, and arrived in America the following autumn. They embarked on a large Flemish vessel, at Friesland, with a number of other passengers. The names of the Brethren who composed this initial group are not left to us.

The troubles to which they had been subjected at Crefelt were discussed at times during the long and tedious weeks of the voyage. Probably it would have been better had they left the matter a closed book, for it seems that some wounds were opened that were not quick to heal. The trials of such a trip as this in those early days before steamships were available can only be imagined. Brumbaugh gives a graphic description of a typical journey across the ocean in those days which often occupied as much as six months. There were such trying experiences as seasickness, homesickness, malnutrition, close confinement, and the weariness of unending days of snail-like progress.⁶

It appears, however, that the Brethren gave a good account of themselves on their journey. Henry Holsinger gives an example of their fidelity in the midst of a most trying circumstance. A furious storm arose, which threatened the destruction of the vessel. The sails were lowered, and much of the merchandise was thrown overboard. All to no avail. Meanwhile the Brethren were in their quarters, in the hold of the ship, unitedly pleading with their Heavenly Father, who needed but to speak the word, "Peace, be still," and the winds and the waves must obey His will.

⁵ Martin G. Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1910), p. 208.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-194.

The captain, in despair and directed by Providence, went to the humble apartment of the devoted Tunkers and, behold, they were praying and singing, as unconcerned as though the sea were quiet. He did not rebuke them for their indifference to their fates as Peter did our Saviour. He was impressed with their pious devotion and serene calmness, and he himself caught the inspiration of hope. He immediately returned to his post and encouraged his crew, declaring that Almighty God would not suffer a ship to perish with such pious people on board. With this assurance, all worked together, the storm soon abated, the sea calmed, and the passage was completed.⁷

Upon arrival at Philadelphia in the autumn of 1719, the Brethren did not remain together. They scattered, seeking to carve out for themselves homes and a livelihood in a new and strange land. Some remained at Philadelphia, some went to Skippack, Oley, and Conestoga, but the majority went to Germantown, about six miles from Philadelphia at that time. There was no attempt to organize themselves into a church for several years but they lived as scattered members, each retaining his own personal convictions and the distinctive beliefs of the Tunker movement without belonging to a visible organization.

The first three years of their existence in this country are practically lost to the history of the church. But as Holsinger says : "No doubt, like some of the sand rivers of Kansas and Nebraska, the current continued to flow onward."⁸ It is not to be assumed that the convictions of so sturdy a people were obliterated even though circumstances worked against their fellowship as a body.

Such inactivity made such Brethren as Peter Becker, John Gomerry, Balser Gansz, and Henry Traut very restless. A young refugee, recently come from Germany, by the name of Conrad Beissel (1690-1769) (of whom we shall hear more later), who worked as an apprentice to Becker as a weaver,

⁷ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), pp. 123-124.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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encouraged the Brethren to do something in the way of uniting their scattered forces. Though not as yet belonging to the Brethren himself, he urged them to make a house-to-house canvass of all the families who had been members of the church in Germany.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Beissel was enthusiasm. For once his enthusiasm was of the right sort and he was able to impart it to those leading Brethren. As a result, in the fall of 1722, Peter Becker, John Gomerry, and George Balser Gansz were commissioned to perform this visit of love in the interest of peace and union between Brethren. This enterprise has often been called the first home mission work performed in America by any religious people. They traversed the regions of Skippack, Falconer's Swamp, Oley, and other places.

The magnitude of this effort can only be conceived as in imagination we think back to the character of the wilderness in those days long before the American Revolution when cities and towns were few and far between; when roads were scarce and road maps were unknown; when oftentimes there were no bridges to span the rivers, and when Indians inhabited the forests. But these stalwart ambassadors of Christ went forth determined and unafraid. They met and worshiped with the brethren and sisters, sought to bring about reconciliation when that was necessary, and always endeavored to stir up the people to a vital walk with the Lord.

This effort was greatly blessed. Some meetings were held in the homes of the Brethren visited. Brotherly love was stimulated and a desire to do something definite in the way of uniting their forces was realized. The visiting committee itself was greatly blessed, and it was determined that when they got back to the Germantown area they would seek to inaugurate public services. The first service was arranged to be held in the home of Peter Becker. This was the first public worship service they had held in that community since their arrival in the New World. The next Sunday they met at John Gomerry's home. And so they continued to meet, alternating from Sun-

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day to Sunday, between these two places. The next year they confined their meetings to the home of Peter Becker, perhaps because of its size or convenience. Thus it appeared that there was a very definite movement in the direction of a permanent establishment of the church in Germantown, but of course there was no definite organization as yet.

A rather curious event took place in August of 1723 which had further to do with the establishment of a definite organization. It was reported that Christian Libe had arrived from Germany. He had suffered severe persecution in that land for his faith, as we have previously seen. This news created quite a sensation and brethren from a distance came to Germantown to see and hear this man from the home country. The report proved to be false, but it resulted in bringing together some of the brethren for fellowship. They were persuaded to remain for several days during which time they greatly enjoyed meetings together with the Germantown Brethren.

Shortly after this and resulting from it there was a spiritual awakening among the brethren in the Schuylkill River area, about thirty-five miles distant. As a result of this awakening there were six persons who had been converted and asked for baptism. This request was the occasion of important proceedings among the Brethren in Germantown, for as yet they had no organization--no one authorized to perform the rite of baptism. But the request was seriously considered and agreed to. The six candidates chose Peter Becker as their baptizer, and all arrangements were made for the first Brethren baptismal service in America.

The time was Christmas Day 1723. On this day there was repeated in a very real sense that which had taken place in Schwarzenau, Germany, some fifteen years before. At Schwarzenau the small group of eight souls became the nucleus for all the future Brethren and observed the ordinances of the church. So at Germantown, on the American continent, there was another banding together of a small group of Brethren and the laying of the foundation of Brethren denominational life in America. Thus the towns of Schwarzenau and Ger-

mantown and the baptismal streams of Eder and Wissahickon have much the same story to tell.

On that day in 1723 which marked both the celebration of the nativity of our Lord and the birth of the first Brethren church in America, the Brethren met at the home of Peter Becker. The exact time of day is not preserved. Becker himself, the natural leader of the group, led them in devotional exercises. In the group there were seventeen persons who had been baptized in the Tunker mode in Europe.

Since they were the nucleus of the Brethren work in America, it is good that their names have been preserved for us. They are as follows: Peter Becker, Henry Traut, Jeremiah Traut, Balser Traut, Henry Holzapple, John Gomerry, Stephen Koch, Jacob Koch, John Hildebrand, Daniel Ritter, George Balser Gansz, John Priesz, Joseph Kaempfer, Magdalene Traut, Anna Gomerry, Maria Hildebrand, and Joanna Gansz. Doubtless some of the good Brethren readers of this account can trace their ancestry back to some of these distinguished leaders.

In addition to the seventeen Brethren mentioned above, there were six other individuals present who had recently embraced the Gospel as a result of the missionary work previously described. They were desirous of affiliation with the Brethren group through the means of trine immersion. Their names were Martin and Catherina Urner, Heinrich Landis and his wife, Friedrich Lang, and Jan Mayle. They are often referred to as the "First Fruits" of Brethren missionary endeavor in America. Before these six could be baptized and received into the new group, it was felt necessary to effect an organization. Thus the seventeen Brethren who were already baptized according to the Brethren belief formally organized themselves into a congregation and chose Peter Becker as their elder. Thus Peter Becker became the first elder chosen by the Brethren in this country. In the choice of Becker by the members of the group, we see the traditional congregational ideal of church government in operation.

The fact that it was winter and snow was lying upon the

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ground did not deter these earnest folk from fulfilling the desire to obey their Lord in the matter of baptism. Therefore, after a noonday meal and after the six candidates had been examined, the "twenty-three souls walk[ed] out into the winter afternoon, in single file, headed by Peter Becker. They journey[ed] to the Wissahickon Creek,"⁹ not far from the location of the present Germantown church and cemetery. When the party reached the banks of the creek, the group knelt and there offered a fervent prayer to the throne of grace. A portion of Luke 14, which speaks of counting the cost in Christian service, was read. There was also the singing of the baptismal hymn composed by Alexander Mack with the pertinent words, "Count the cost, says Jesus Christ, when the foundations thou wouldst lay."

Quite a crowd of curious onlookers was present to observe the proceedings. They had been attracted to the group as they were wending their way to the baptismal scene. Reverently they watched as one by one the six candidates were led into the cold stream. Peter Becker first entered the water, through a thin layer of ice, leading Martin Urner, the first recipient of the rite, by the hand. Following the trine immersion of Urner, that of his wife Catherine was solemnized, and then the four others. Because of the chill of the atmosphere there was little tarrying of the group at the water's edge after the ceremony was completed. They proceeded to the home of John Gomerry, where dry clothing was provided.

But further blessing was in store for this infant group before this Christmas Day was done. The first organization of the Tunker church in America and the first baptisms administered by the Brethren in this country were to be followed by the celebration of the first love feast among the Brethren on this continent. There were twenty-three persons now in the group with the addition of the six who had just received baptism.

Let us visualize that solemn scene during colonial days when for the first time our Brethren forefathers gathered about the

⁹ Martin G. Brumbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

Lord's table to observe the ordinances. The old-time tallow candles were lighted. The group was all gathered around a long table with the brethren on one side and the sisters on the other. Peter Becker was in charge. A hymn was sung, the Scripture was read, and there in the dimly lighted evening hour, with no witness but God, these people began the observance of the holy ordinances. They arose from the table and engaged in the washing of the saints' feet, the men with the men, and the women with the women. They then ate the love feast and partook of the elements of the bread and the cup. Could there be a more fitting way to observe a Christmas evening than this—a holy remembrance of the threefold aspect of our salvation which the Saviour came to provide?

The service and day were over. It was night, and the little group went out of the memorable assembly. They went out to be pathfinders for countless thousands of others who have "repeated their act in a thousand twilights in all parts of this country in all the years that have come and gone, and, please God, we will repeat them again and again until He shall say, 'It is enough. Come up higher.'"¹⁰ This was indeed a red-letter day in Brethren history. Thus to a degree at least the first phase of their immigration became established.

The second wave of immigration took place in 1729, about ten years after the first. After being in West Friesland (in the Netherlands) since 1720, whence they had fled from Schwarzenau because of persecution, they came to see that in view of the general religious and political situation with which they were surrounded it was to their advantage to cast their lot with their brethren in America. Hence they sailed from Rotterdam on July 7, 1729, in the ship *Allen*, which was under the command of James Craigie. After a stormy voyage of seventy-one days they landed at Philadelphia September 15. In order to suggest the providential leading of the Lord in the whole venture, an artist by the name of J. Hanna has painted a picture of the good ship *Allen* on a wave-tossed sea. Over the ship and behind it is superimposed the majestic figure

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156f.

A HISTORY OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH

of Christ watching over its destiny.¹¹ Brethren people are fully convinced of the divine leadership and protection that brought them to America and established them here.

This group was under the human direction of Alexander Mack, the leader of the original group at Schwarzenau. The whole company consisted of about thirty families or 126 individuals, although the statistics on this matter vary slightly according to the existing sources. Upon arrival in Philadelphia, they recognized their allegiance to King George II and became British subjects. Mack and his company were received at Germantown with great rejoicing. Many friendships were renewed, experiences related and hopes expressed. The church at Germantown was greatly strengthened and encouraged. The new arrivals at last had found a place of rest from their wanderings and persecutions and were happy in the associations of their brethren. Alexander Mack, with Peter Becker's full approval, at once assumed the leadership and direction of the Germantown church, which position he held with great wisdom and skill until his death in 1735.

This practically completed the western trek of the Brethren from Europe. The two waves of immigration merged and became a compact force. At various times during these years and afterwards there were a few individual brethren who came to America to join the group. John Naas, for example, who had gone to Switzerland after the unfortunate incident at Crefelt, came in 1733 with several others upon the urgent insistence of Mack. Since Naas was really the last strong Brethren leader in Germany, his departure practically marked the end of the early Brethren movement in that land. One other elder remained, Christian Libe, but he soon deserted the remnant of the church and became a wine merchant.

Thus just twenty-five years after its beginning at Schwarzenau, the Brethren movement ceased to exist in the cradle of its existence, but by this time it was firmly established in the New World.

¹¹ Lawrence W. Shultz, *Schwarzenau Yesterday and Today* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1954), p. 46.

BRETHREN, WESTWARD HO!

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4

• *Sunshine and Shadow*
• *During the Period of the*
• *Macks and the Sowers*
• *(1729-1776)*
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Upon the arrival of Alexander Mack in America he found the Brethren beginning to branch out into neighboring territories. Besides the Germantown congregation, organized on Christmas Day in 1723, there were two other congregations which had been established, one at Coventry in 1724, and the other at Conestoga, later in the same year. Peter Becker, the elder in charge at Germantown, was the first minister in both of these new congregations. Upon the arrival of Alexander Mack with his group from Europe, the Brethren in this country were greatly encouraged. They soon brought about the establishment of congregations in a number of other places. In 1729 the White Oak congregation was organized in Lancaster County. In 1732 Peter Becker preached at Oley in Berks County, baptized several members and organized them into a congregation. The next year (1733) Elder John Naas organized a church at Amwell, New Jersey, and another at Great Swamp, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in the same year. The Conowago church was organized in 1738 and others soon afterwards. The Cocalico church was organized in 1735. From these centers near Philadelphia, the church was gradually to spread westward until it finally would reach the shores of the Pacific.

No sooner had Mack arrived in this country than he found a tragic development within the church which was to cause him sorrow till the day of his death. It is the sad story of the first division in the organized ranks of the Brethren in Amer-

ica. It is usually spoken of as the Ephrata Movement, a strange combination of mysticism, monasticism, and legalism. Even Mack's own son, Alexander, Jr. (1712-1803), became involved in the movement.

The defection began before Mack arrived in this country but was rising in influence when he got here. The story of it gathers about a man by the name of Conrad Beissel who came to America in 1720 when about thirty years of age. He settled at Germantown and became an apprentice of Peter Becker in the weaver's trade, remaining with him about a year. After this he moved farther west into the Conestoga country. When Peter Becker and others from Germantown made a missionary tour through this territory in 1724, they baptized a number of converts in Conestoga Creek and organized the Conestoga congregation as we have noted before. Among these baptized was Conrad Beissel, although the latter found particular difficulty in humbling himself to the extent of letting someone else baptize him. But, finally, reasoning within himself that even Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptize him, he pocketed his pride and allowed the humble Becker to baptize him. However, no change was wrought in his haughty disposition. In order that this newly gathered group might have a leader and religious services, the following day at the organization of the church a glaring mistake of laying hands too suddenly upon a man was made, and Beissel was elected minister of the group. He was later to be known as Father Friedsam, after the full organization of the Ephrata Movement.

For a short time things went well at Conestoga, for Beissel was a man of some ability and possessed a winsome personality. He was a good speaker and was able to sway people to his views. He was also quite a musician, being the composer of many hymns. According to Scott's Scrap Book, a newspaper cartoon, the first original music composed by white men in the western hemisphere was a book of Dunkard hymns prepared by Beissel about 1750.¹ But it was not long until it was evident

¹This cartoon is in the possession of the writer, but unfortunately its source is unknown. The information it gives, however, appears authentic.

that some of his views were at variance with those of many of the brethren. Confusion was the result. He leaned strongly toward the Old Testament. He declared the seventh day as the day of worship, not the first. He seemed to prefer the law to the grace of God. He was always referring to the Ten Commandments. He advocated a monastic order of life, denounced marriage, and advocated the celibate state. Other strange doctrines were often found upon his lips.

The leaders of the Germantown church came to reason with him, but Beissel refused to counsel with them. He felt himself above the exhortation of such men. Thus all efforts to get him to conform to the regular beliefs and practices of the Brethren proved to be of no avail, and in 1728 he took things in his own hands and withdrew from the Brethren movement by giving back the baptism which had been ministered to him by Peter Becker. It was done in the following fashion, Jan Meyle, one of his followers, cooperating with him: Meyle immersed Beissel thrice backwards, and immediately afterwards repeated the action thrice forwards, thus baptizing the candidate anew. Beissel then repeated the same ceremony upon Meyle and others in turn who wished to renounce their former baptism and follow him into his new organization. This "babyish act," as Falkenstein calls it,² completed the separation between the Germantown and Conestoga Brethren. This was the condition of things when Alexander Mack arrived on the scene in 1729. Mack himself tried to reason with Beissel in order to bring about a reconciliation, all to no avail and to his great sorrow.

Beissel proceeded to organize his followers upon a monastic or communal basis. He recognized three classes of members: household members, or those who had married; solitary brethren, who took vows to live single, chaste lives; and spiritual virgins, who vowed to live pure, virgin lives. At first the little community grew slowly, but a few years later Beissel moved farther west and established himself as a hermit on the banks

²George N. Falkenstein, *History of the German Baptist Brethren Church* (Lancaster, Pa.: The New Era Printing Co., 1901), p. 60.

of Cocalico Creek where his followers flocked about him in 1732.

This really marks the beginning of Ephrata and the monastic system, the first Protestant monastery in America. A large number of buildings were erected including separate houses for men and women, a large chapel, a school, and buildings connected with the industrial life of the community. Here was something of the middle ages set down in the New World—a recurrence of the old belief that seclusion from the world is the surest means of attaining to holiness. It became attractive to many people. Beissel made many contacts among the Brethren churches and won a goodly number to his cause. This, of course, caused much distress within these churches as one by one its members left for the cloister. Even influential members were led away by Beissel's mystical teachings. Some ministers were included, such as Stephen Koch, Henry Kalckglasser, and George Adam Martin.

Ludwig Hoecker, of Germantown, who organized something within the Brethren church that approximates closely the modern Sunday school over forty years before the time of Robert Raikes, was carried away by the movement. More amazing still is the fact that Alexander Mack, Jr., also came under Beissel's spell and for ten years led the monastic life, but finally saw his error, as did many others, and returned to Germantown and became one of the great elders and leaders of the church in his later life.

One of the most heartbreaking cases of deception of this time was that of the wife of the first Christopher Sower (1693-1758), Maria Christina, who left her husband and nine-year-old son, took the veil, and lived in the cloister for fourteen years. Finally, in 1744, in response to a pleading letter from her son, written on his birthday, she returned home and was reconciled to her husband, who had never ceased longing and praying for this to happen. Harry A. Brandt, in his little book *Christopher Sower and Son* has told the whole story in a most interesting manner.

And so the Ephrata movement succeeded in bringing no

small disruption in the Brethren church in the forepart of the 18th century. Homes were divided and broken. This came as the result of the false teaching of Beissel that "marriage is the penitentiary of the carnal man,"³ that the only true marriage is of a religious sort—a complete devotion of the soul to the service of God. Brethren became embittered toward one another, congregations were torn asunder as the result of Beissel's unholy doctrine and practice. The movement prospered only under his leadership. Holsinger says: "For a period of ten years or more after the work was fully organized at Ephrata, say from 1730 to 1740, they were the more influential faction of the body."⁴ But after Beissel's death in 1769, the movement gradually diminished. Under his immediate successor, Peter Miller (called Brother Jaebez in the cloister), the supposed author of *Chronicon Ephratense*, the movement moderated somewhat and from then on it continued to fade as it should have done earlier, since, as J. E. Miller has said: "Its teachings, its spirit, its manner of life were entirely foreign to Brethren teachings and life. The Brethren have always been strong on building the Christian family. Beissel condemned marriage and tried to destroy the Christian family."⁵ The Ephrata movement was never an integral part of the Brethren movement as it was originally conceived and organized.

This having been said, it remains a fact that Ephrata commends itself to students of history in several other ways. It became the musical center of colonial America. Conrad Beissel, being quite a musician, was able to project his musical ability into the cloister. He composed hundreds of hymns and produced a hymnal which was widely used. Ephrata became a great center of German-American printing and bookmaking, being second only to Germantown with its Sower press, reference to which will be made later. Moreover, Ephrata became notable

³ Harry A. Brandt, *Christopher Sower and Son* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1938), p. 42.

⁴ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 135.

⁵ J. E. Miller, *The Story of Our Church* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1941), p. 50.

as a place of refuge during the Revolutionary War, when Washington, with his troops at Valley Forge, found the going well-nigh despairing. In the battle of Brandywine, Washington lost about twelve hundred soldiers. Besides these many became wounded and sick. He started westward to Ephrata with about five hundred of those who could travel. Their journey was a hard one, and some died on the way. Others succumbed after they arrived, but the care given them at the cloister proved good, and many of them were able to rejoin the armed forces. The Pennsylvania State Historical Commission has erected a monument at Ephrata to commemorate this interesting bit of Americana.

What then is left of the Ephrata movement and the fanatical dreams of Conrad Beissel? Only a few dilapidated buildings which the Historical Commission is now in the process of seeking to restore to remind folks of an extinct episode in our early American life. A well-written and illustrated account of Ephrata has been prepared by A. Monroe Aurand, Jr., under the title *Historical Account of the Ephrata Cloister and the Seventh Day Baptist Society*. A branch of the movement was located at Snowhill, Pennsylvania, near Waynesboro. It, too, is just a ghost of its former existence.

Two men who contributed much to the Brethren movement during colonial days were Christopher Sower and his son of the same name. They served to give recognition to the Brethren movement beyond the confines of the Brethren church itself because of their many contributions to society in their day. It is to the credit of the elder Sower that he transplanted German printing to America. His greatest service, as is also true of his son, was in the field of the printed page. Together they accomplished a prodigious amount of work along this line.

Not very much is known about the early life of the first Sower. He was born in 1693 in the village of Laasphe, Germany, not far from Schwarzenau, birthplace of Brethrenism. When he was baptized and joined the Brethren church, the records do not reveal. There are some who doubt that he ever actually joined the Brethren, though evidence to the con-

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trary seems convincing. He was a well-educated man, having graduated from the University of Marburg, the first Protestant university in Germany. He was a ten-talent man who apparently could do almost anything. It is well-nigh unbelievable, but irrefutable evidence points to his having been a tailor, a printer, an apothecary, a surgeon, botanist, clock and watch-maker, bookbinder, papermaker, manufacturer of tools, ink, and many other useful things.

He did not come to America in either of the great waves of emigration in 1719 or 1729 but, together with his wife, Maria Christina, and their only child, Christopher the second (1721-1784), he came to these shores in 1724 and went to Germantown where he met Peter Becker and others whom he had known in Germany. In 1726 he moved westward to Lancaster County, where he purchased fifty acres of land at Muelbach. This proved to be a sad episode in his life because of its proximity to Conrad Beissel, who unsettled his wife until she left him in 1730 to take up the monastic life at Ephrata, where she became subprioress of the Sisterhood and was known as Sister Marcella.

The period of fourteen years, when Christopher and son had to live alone, were far from idle years, though they were covered with a cloud of inexpressible sorrow. In 1731 the two moved to Germantown, largely under the influence of Alexander Mack who was now in America. In Germantown Sower bought six acres of ground, later increased, and began the erection of a large house with two stories and an attic. This was a very pretentious house in those days and destined to be the center of great importance to the Brethren, for not only was the printing business of Sower carried on here but it became the meeting place of the Brethren for a good many years until the first church building was erected in 1770 in Germantown. After following several other trades, in 1738 he secured a printer's outfit from Germany. This is usually considered to be the press on which was printed the famous Berleberg Bible from 1726 to 1742 by John Jacob Hang, a Pietist and follower of Ernst Hochmann. This was the opinion

of Abram H. Cassel (1820-1908), the distinguished librarian of the Tunker Church of his day. Alexander Mack and other Brethren had been vitally interested in the publication of this revised German Bible. Sower also became the agent for the sale of the Berleberg Bible, a very large and cumbersome work of three volumes.

Very likely, then, it was upon this press that Christopher Sower began a ministry of printing in colonial America that was to have its effect on all the colonies. Among the productions of this press were an annual almanac, which continued to be issued by Sower, his son, and grandson, for forty-nine years; first German hymnbook, the first German newspaper in America, and the first Bible in a European tongue published in America. The latter appeared in 1743 and two subsequent editions were printed by his son in the years 1763 and 1776. The Sower Bible was by all means the most important of the prodigious efforts put forth by the two Sowers. This work entailed the casting of his own type, the making of his own paper, the compounding of his own printer's ink, and the creation of his own bookbinding service. Sower enlarged and increased his business of publishing until his publications in the German and English languages numbered over 250 works, mainly of a religious character.

Martin G. Brumbaugh has summarized Sower's many activities as follows:

Could you have entered any German home from New York to Georgia in 1754 and asked, "Who is Christoph Saur?"—you would have learned that in every German home the Bible, opened morning and evening, was printed in 1743 by Christoph Saur; that the sanctuary and hearth were wreathed in music from the *Davidische Psalterspiel*, printed by Christoph Saur; that the family almanac, rich in medicinal and historic data, and containing the daily weather guide of the family, was printed by Christoph Saur in 1739, and every year thereafter until his death in 1758, and then by his son until 1778; that the religious magazine, prized with pious ardor and read with profound appreciation, was printed by Christoph Saur; that the secular newspaper, containing all the current domestic and foreign news, linking the farm of the German with the whole wide world, was printed from 1739 by Christoph Saur; that the ink and paper used in

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sending letters to loved ones across the sea came from the shop of Christoph Saur, and was of his own manufacture; that the new six-plate stove, glowing in the long winter evenings with warmth and welcome, was invented and sold by Christoph Saur; that the medicine that brought health to the sick was compounded by Dr. Christoph Saur; that the old clock, telling the hours, the months and phases of the moon, in yon corner of the room, was made by Christoph Saur; that almost every book upon the table was printed by Christoph Saur, upon his own press, with type and ink of his own manufacture, and bound in his own bindery; that the dreadful abuses and oppressions they suffered in crossing the Atlantic had been lessened by the heroic protests to Governor Denny of one man, and that man was Christoph Saur; that the sick emigrants upon landing in Philadelphia were met by a warm friend who conveyed them in carriages to his own house, and without money and without price nursed them to health, had the Gospel of the Savior preached to them, and sent them rejoicing and healed to their wilderness homes, and that friend was Christoph Saur: that, in short, the one grandest German of them all, loved and followed most devotedly, was Christoph Saur, the Good Samaritan of Germantown.⁶

Christopher Sower the Second was not behind his father in importance to the Brethren of the colonial period. He continued the ministry of the printed page after his father had passed away in 1758. Among other things he distinguished himself by printing the first book on education in America. This was a unique treatise by his Mennonite schoolteacher by the name of Christopher Dock, whom he loved and admired greatly. This took place in 1770. Mack's book, *A Brief and Simple Exposition of the Outward but still Sacred Rites and Ordinances of the House of God*, was printed on Sower's busy press in the year 1774. As we have previously seen, he was the printer of the 1763 and 1776 editions of the German Bible. In the preface of the 1776 edition he says: "There appears now for the third time on this American continent the Holy Bible in the so-called high German language, to the honor of the German people in this, that no other nation can show that the Bible on this continent has been printed in their language."

⁶ Martin G. Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1910), pp. 374-376.

Christopher the Second was an earnest Christian. He came under the influence of Alexander Mack, Peter Becker, and other leaders of the church. He appears to have become a Christian at 16 years of age in the year of 1737, and from then on without a break he continued faithfully in the Lord's work. He became a leading elder in the church in 1753, being ordained by Peter Becker at the same time as Alexander Mack, Jr., with whom he was an associate for many years in the Germantown church.

These two sons of distinguished fathers were to leave a wholesome influence upon the church. Christopher became a preacher of power and a splendid pastor, being beloved by all his people and admired by his neighbors. His charity exceeded that of all his brethren so that he came to be known among the poor of Germantown as "The Bread Father." He was an active participant in the affairs of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren, which began as we shall see in 1742. He issued the *Geistliche Magazine*, the first religious magazine published in America, the fifty issues of which he distributed free of charge because the profits from the 1763 edition of the Bible were so much more than he had expected.

The 1776 edition of his Bible is bathed in the aroma of shot and shell, as the date would suggest. Many of the unbound pages were laid on the loft of the Germantown meeting house to dry. Some of them were still there when the battle of Germantown in the American Revolution was fought. The cavalymen took these sheets and scattered them under their horses instead of straw. After the battle Sower gathered as many of these precious sheets together as he could and bound from them enough complete Bibles to present one to each of his children.

Christopher the Younger became a strong supporter of all proper means of education for the youth of the land. It is good for us to remember this in view of some of the developments in the next century when many of the Brethren came to frown upon institutions of learning. Sower showed his interest in a very definite way by assisting in founding and

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maintaining the still famous and flourishing Germantown Academy. Indeed, he served as trustee of the Academy for many years, and was president of the board on two occasions. "Like his illustrious father, he was an apostle of light to the Germans of America."⁷

As an elder in the church at the time of the American Revolution, he was subjected to many trying experiences. He was accused, along with others of his faith, of being disloyal by refusing to bear arms, which no true Brethren could do. At times he was accused of being pro-British because he would not have anything to do with bearing arms against them. He refused to take the oath of allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania. Nonswearing or refusal to take oaths has always been practiced by the Brethren. He was called upon as a pastor to defend others who took the same traditional viewpoints with respect to war and oaths. At times he was persecuted and shamefully abused because he remained true to his convictions. Because of the open loyalism of his two sons, he was accused of disloyalty. But being reviled, he reviled not again.

Once Sower's property was seized and confiscated. At another time he was struck in the back with bayonets and stripped naked. But in each experience he showed himself to be a man steadfast in his convictions and left a testimony that has blessed the church since his day. William Sweet calls him "the most prominent Dunker in the Revolutionary period" and remarks on his "meekness with which he bore his cruel mistreatment and resulting poverty, refusing to go to court to regain his property because it was contrary to his religious principles."⁸

Reference has been made to the Annual Meetings in which Christopher Sower participated during his ministry. In this connection it should be noted that at the beginning the church had no general conferences either in the old country or in America. There was fellowship between the congregations, but they were not impressed in the early days with the need for

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

⁸ William Warren Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 44f.

conferences. They took care of necessary business in the local churches.

Not until 1742 was the first general conference held. The need for it was imposed from without the Brethren fellowship. The Annual Meeting was created as a means first of defense, then for edification. It came into existence as the result of a movement among the German sects of Pennsylvania in 1742, known as the "Pennsylvania Synods of 1742." The latter was an endeavor led by Count Zinzendorf, the head of the Moravian Church, to bring about greater unity and fellowship among German Christians. Among those cooperating at the first were Tunkers, Lutherans, German Reformed, Mennonites, and Moravians.

Some of the Brethren began to fear lest by these meetings some might be led away from the simplicity of the Brethren faith and into infant baptism and other practices from which the Brethren had separated themselves after careful study of the New Testament. And so it was decided that to maintain the solidarity of the Brethren there should be held a yearly conference. Hence in 1742 the first of the Annual Meetings was held. Where it was held is not recorded. Brumbaugh thinks it was probably at Coventry, in the house of Martin Urner, Sr., for it was in his house that the congregation usually worshiped at this time. The first such meeting of which we have any minutes is the one held in 1778 at Pipe Creek, Maryland.

These Annual Meetings were held in various congregations. Each conference received invitations for the entertainment of the conference of the following year. There being no church buildings until after 1770, the conferences were held in barns, tents, and other large available buildings. From the beginning of such meetings, it is clear that the congregational idea was always kept in mind. Each congregation managed its own affairs, but was glad for the advice, counsel, and fellowship of the larger group. In other words the Annual Meeting did not dominate the local church. It advised and provided unity and fellowship which are absolutely essential.

Local churches held their meetings in homes of the members for over forty years after the beginning at Germantown. In the case of the Germantown church, they were usually held in the homes of Brethren Becker, Gomerry, Gansz, Traut, and Kalckglasser. It was literally true in those days that it was "the church which is in thy house." By 1729 when Mack came to America, some difficulty was encountered because of the growth of the group. Then it was that Christopher Sower built a large house on Germantown Avenue. The second story of this house was constructed with partitions so that when necessary they could be swung open and a large audience room secured. Here the Brethren worshiped until 1760, when the second Sower was an elder in the church. It was still a church in the house. Sower's growing family and an advancing business made it inconvenient for the church to continue meeting at this location.

Between 1760 and 1770 they worshiped in a dwelling of a member of the Brethren church by the name of John Pettikofer who with his wife joined the Ephrata movement. Pettikofer had been very poor and was given the land on which his house was built by another member of the church, Peter Schilbert. Pettikofer begged money for the erection of the house; hence this area came to be called Beggarstown. After the Pettikofers had left for Ephrata, Schilbert finally retrieved the property he had given to Pettikofer and gave it to the Germantown congregation for a burial ground and meeting place.

In 1770 at the rear of the house, a stone church was built which is still standing though it has been remodeled and added to on several occasions. The Pettikofer dwelling became an old folks' home in which the poor of the congregation were sheltered. This is no doubt the oldest home for the poor established by the Brotherhood. It became the forerunner in the Tunker fraternity of other institutions established to care for the poor and the aged among its constituency. An example is the *Brethren Home* near Flora, Indiana, which is operated by the Brethren Home and Benevolence Board (Ashland Group). It was opened in 1923 largely through the generosity

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of a consecrated layman and his wife, Brother and Sister Henry Rinehart, who lived in the Flora community.

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*Persecution Engenders
Migration (1776-1810)*

The Revolutionary War brought great trial to the Brethren people. One of their beliefs was that it is wrong for the Christian to engage in carnal conflict. This belief very quickly brought them into disrepute with those in authority in the colony. The colonial government had passed a law which was aimed directly at these people and the Quakers, who also opposed war. This law required every citizen of the colony to subscribe to an oath renouncing allegiance to the British government and pledging allegiance to the colony of Pennsylvania.

The government of the colony was pledged to unyielding prosecution of the war against England, and every loyal citizen must devote himself unreservedly to this policy. Two things relating to this matter the Brethren could not do and be true to their convictions—go to war or take an oath. This did not mean they were disloyal to, or disinterested in, the welfare of the colonial cause. What then were they to do? Some whose convictions were not very deep, acquiesced to the popular pressure and followed the demands of the government. Thus we have the disappointing story of the two sons of the Second Christopher Sower and their families, who practically renounced the Brethren faith in favor of Loyalism.

There were others who remained true to their convictions and stayed in Germantown and its vicinity. These were often subjected to severe persecutions such as the loss of their property and the scorn and ridicule of those who did not understand.

But there was a third group which fled from the scene of persecution. They were like the disciples in the eighth chapter

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of Acts who because of persecution left Jerusalem and "went everywhere preaching the word."¹ Indeed they were also like their forefathers in Germany who because of the stress of the times left the home country for America. And so the war was responsible for tides of emigration which flowed westward and southward.

In following this course of action they often had to leave behind them most of their earthly possessions, taking with them only that which could be transported in wagons, on horseback, or in boats. In 1775 there were only three Brethren congregations outside of Pennsylvania—one in New Jersey, and two in Maryland. Those in Pennsylvania were nearly all located east of the Susquehanna River. It seems to be often true that God uses severe means to bring about the onward movement of His cause. It is so easy to settle down in a comfortable place and forget the outside world. God must stir up the Tunker nest.

The circumstances of the times were responsible for the removal of John H. Garber first into Frederick County, Maryland, where he was active in the ministry for seven years. He is doubtless the ancestor of the Garbers, so well known and numerous in Brethren history. In 1775, he with most of his family migrated to the Shenandoah Valley, settling near Flat Rock. He was the first Brethren minister in this section and engaged in widespread ministry in this area. He developed a friendly relationship with the Indians. He was instrumental in organizing the first Brethren congregation in Virginia at Flat Rock which has enjoyed a continuous existence until the present time. The growth of the church in this area was so marked that the Annual Meeting of 1794 was held in the Shenandoah Valley.

Another pioneer who left Pennsylvania shortly before the Revolution (1765) was Jacob Miller. He settled in the vicinity of Roanoke, Virginia, and witnessed such a development of the church that in 1797 the Annual Meeting was held at Blackwater. This conference became memorable in that it definitely

¹ Acts 8:4.

considered the matter of slavery at some length and came to the conclusion that Brethren cannot hold slaves, and that those who do have slaves must set them free. This was a bold action for the church to take in a slave-holding state such as Virginia. Other prominent names closely associated with the history of the Brethren in Virginia include Moomaw, Nininger, Bowman, Naff, Nead, and Crumpacher.

Brethren from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia early made their way into what is now West Virginia. As early as 1785 the Arnold family settled within the bounds of West Virginia, and came directly from Frederick County, Maryland. Beaver Run is recorded as the first organized church in that area; its date of organization was early in the 1800's. The Brethren got as far south as North Carolina before the eighteenth century closed, coming there from Pennsylvania and Virginia. As early as 1795 a group of Brethren from North Carolina went west and settled in Missouri. From the latter place came John Hendricks, a pioneer Brethren in the region of Kentucky, Missouri, and Illinois. Brethren emigrants came from Rockingham and Franklin Counties in Virginia to be the first settlers for Tennessee, and about 1800 the first Brethren church was organized at Knob Creek, of Washington County. Samuel Garber, from Rockingham County, was its organizer.

It appears that in these early days there were two main tides of emigration, one south and one west. Thus far we have been mainly concerned with the southern tide. Look for a moment at the western tide. It included a movement into the western part of Pennsylvania which has been well recorded by a number of histories. It spilled over into Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, and got as far west as Illinois and Missouri, as we have already indicated. The Brethren entered Ohio along the Ohio River east of Cincinnati. The first Brethren minister in the state is said to have been John Countryman, who settled in Adams County about 1793. The first congregation in this state was organized by David Stouder in 1795.

Jacob Miller, whom we previously noted in a distinguished ministry in southern Virginia, moved to a spot near Dayton

in 1800 and was instrumental in organizing congregations in the Miami Valley. Among the prominent names in those early days were Wolfe, Shively, Forney, Noffsinger, Ullery, Vaniman, Bowser, and Coblentz. Lower Miami, organized in 1805, became the mother congregation of this area. About the same time Elder George Hoke led the way into northeast Ohio. He and his followers went north and west from Pittsburgh into Mahoning County. They settled in what is now Zion Hill and formed a church called Mill Creek. Hoke served at Mill Creek until 1826 when he moved on to Canton serving there about twenty-five years. He was a man of notable stature in the church of his day.

Following 1804 a number of Brethren made their way from Pennsylvania and Virginia to settle in Indiana and organized the first Brethren church in this state; namely, at Four Mile, in 1809. This church was organized by Jacob Miller, whom we have met before, and John Hart. The second church in the state was organized at Nettle Creek, in Wayne County, in 1820, by Daniel and Aaron Miller, sons of Jacob Miller. Here the first Brethren meeting house was erected in 1845, a large brick structure one mile from Hagerstown. The westward tide of which we have been speaking would surely include that of the George Wolfes (there were three Brethren elders by this name) who became prominent in the history of the church.

Prior to 1800 the first Elder George Wolfe (1780-1865) moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to the vicinity of Pittsburgh. At the latter place he and his sons engaged in building boats for emigrants. Finally, they built a boat for themselves and in it floated down the beautiful Ohio in 1800 and settled at Muhlenberg, Kentucky, where there was already a settlement of Brethren. The fifth panel in a series of interesting panels depicting the history of the Tunker movement, from its beginnings to the present time, hangs on the wall of the tabernacle at Camp Alexander Mack, near Milford, Indiana. It shows the mother in front of the cabin busily knitting. A spinning wheel is by the side of the cabin. On the top of the cabin a steersman is operating the rudder. The painting sym-

bolizes the heavy migration westward down the Ohio in the late part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The same panel pictures the typical Conestoga wagons used in those days as the means of transportation.²

From Muhlenberg Wolfe's sons, George and Jacob, went to Union County, Illinois, in 1808, settling about fifty miles north of Cairo. In 1809 the father went on a preaching tour in Illinois, where his sons lived, and on to Missouri, where there was a Brethren settlement as early as 1795. Wolfe was the first Brethren to preach and be buried in Illinois. His son George was the first to be baptized, called to the ministry, and ordained elder in Illinois. He became the leader of the "Far Western Brethren" of whom we shall learn more later. Illinois was in the far west in those days.

Thus we have sketchily traced the beginnings of a movement that was to extend more and more until it reached the Pacific Coast.

Life was far from easy for these Brethren who had emigrated. They had to carve out for themselves a livelihood in a new and strange country. They had to build new homes and endure the loneliness of isolation in many instances. Most of these folk became farmers no matter what their former occupations had been.

While in eastern Pennsylvania many of the Brethren had followed trades of various sorts—some being shopkeepers, others weavers, dyers, tailors, and the like. But when they came to the less populous areas it became necessary to become tillers of the soil. In lands rich in productivity many of these people soon became prosperous by their industry and simple ways of living. They were sometimes widely separated as individuals and groups and had little communication with each other, although they usually emigrated in colonies. As Flory has said: "The church had literally buried itself in the forests and on the prairies of the new world."³

² Laurence D. Shultz and Medford D. Neher, *A Mural History of the Church of the Brethren* (Dixon, Ill.: The Shaw Printing Co., 1953), p. 14.

³ John S. Flory, *Flashlights from History* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1932), 115.

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It is not to be expected that the development of the church would be rapid under such conditions. Ways of travel were slow; roads were poor; bridges were few. Making a living in those rugged days took much time and attention. Then, too, these folks were for the most part Germans, which tended to isolate them somewhat from those who spoke English. The church was undergoing what may be called its wilderness experience at this time. As it moved outward, it carried with it the same simplicity of faith and practice that it had known in the vicinity of Germantown. Even their dress was meant to mark them as humble followers of the Lamb of God. They had copied something of the Puritans and Quakers in this regard.

We must not suppose, however, that the Brethren living under these conditions had lost their faith. They had given up too much to permit it to slip from them so easily. Their faith kept them. In many of these homes the family altar was a vital reality. Before retiring at night the family would gather together, a hymn would be sung in German, a chapter would be read from the New Testament, and a prayer offered. Perhaps on one Sunday a month, and that only in the morning, they would attend a preaching service at a neighbor's house several miles distant. On the other three Sundays the elder was busy with other appointments and so there was no service. When meetings were held they usually walked to the services, although sometimes they rode in a wagon. They had no Sunday schools or young people's meetings. The Brethren always remembered the Lord's Day to keep it holy whether they had public services or not. No unnecessary work was done on the farm. On the Sundays when there were no meetings visits were often made among neighbors and friends, for those were about the only times that they saw one another.

The church services were held in different homes of the membership, often in the home of the elder if it was large enough. Not yet had they begun to build church buildings in this western area. The services themselves were very simple, but very earnest, usually beginning about ten o'clock and

closing about twelve o'clock unless the sometimes rambling remarks of the minister were unduly long. The minister opened the service by announcing a hymn and reading about two lines from the only copy of the hymnbook present. Some musical brother produced a tune to fit the words and all present joined heartily in the singing. Then two more lines were read, and sung, and so on until the hymn was finished. When time for prayer came everyone knelt while the minister, sometimes two, led in fervent prayer. At his request someone, often a deacon, read a chapter from the Sower Bible.

The entire service was in German, of course. The sermon was doctrinal and full of exhortation to live out the truth expressed. The audience was not critical. And that was fortunate because usually the sermons were not homiletical and the language was not polished. For the most part the preachers were self-trained men who labored during the week for a living and preached on Sunday without thought of payment for their services. What these men lacked in finesse they made up in earnestness and fidelity to what they believed the Word taught. There was never any doubt but that God had spoken.

At the conclusion of these meetings, there was plenty of time taken for visiting. Often a common meal was served, those coming from afar bringing a part to add to the already bounteous supply. These times of fellowship were the high points in their social life. They had nothing else. They planned for these gatherings with keen anticipation. No one was absent unless detained by illness or some other unavoidable hindrance. Invariably these gatherings included the greeting of one another with the Christian salutation or kiss, men with the men and the women with the women. This was one way that they felt they were obeying their Lord's will and in which they expressed their love and loyalty to their brethren.

Such was the state of the church shortly following the American Revolution. It became a rural church for the most part. It settled itself in little groups in a dozen states from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Because of its extreme isolation, the church of this period has often been called "the church in

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the wilderness." It became mainly interested in its own affairs and did not look far beyond its own horizons. It possessed very limited educational advantages to the end that the church could not build up a strong leadership until this situation was rectified. It was the day before railroads and automobiles and so their contacts were very limited.

But these folk possessed a thriftiness that enabled them to get along in the world, and to compel admiration upon the part of those who observed their industry and wholesome homelife. They also possessed a sincere love for the Word and ways of God, a child-like faith that expressed itself in humble, upright living that was sure to make itself felt in the days to come.

What about the churches back in Pennsylvania as a result of the Revolution and the emigrations? They suffered some distinct losses. The Sower press was destroyed which for so long with its continual flow of light-giving literature had given prestige to the infant church. It lost many of its members through the different migrations to the frontiers of the south and west. There was a loss of interest in education with the passing of the Macks and the Sowers, and Sunday schools were discontinued. But the Brethren did not cease to function in this area. They maintained their faith and were better organized than the groups which migrated. After the death of Alexander Mack, Jr., in 1803 the city churches ceased to exert a leading role among the Brethren. The Brethren church had become a rural church with a rural atmosphere pervading all its activity, and so it continued for many decades.

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The Period of Consolidation

(1810-1850)

George Wolfe to John Kline

6

The years following the tides of emigration to the south and the west were years of consolidation. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, following the flush of activity resulting from the American Revolution and the call of the south and the west to opportunities for peaceful settlement and economic advantage, there was a process of settling down, of becoming adjusted to new surroundings and a new type of life. Dr. Raymond E. Gingrich, a careful student of Brethren history, has called the years 1836 to 1851 the period of consolidation, following the years 1719 to 1836 which he designates as the period of colonization.¹ The forming of individual Brethren congregations for more than a hundred years led to the consolidation of these congregations into a definite Brotherhood with an official name. Whereas, prior to this time they were called Brethren, German Baptists, Tunkers, and other names, at the Annual Meeting of 1836, held at Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, they took the name "The Fraternity of German Baptists." A query was presented to the Meeting as follows: "What should be the name of our fraternity, when a title for a meeting-house is made and recorded in the public offices?" After due consideration the following conclusion was reached: "Unanimously concluded to call ourselves the Fraternity of German Baptists."²

¹ Raymond E. Gingrich, "Historical Sketch of the Brethren Church in America," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, May 31, 1947.

² *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren*, Article 6, 1836. (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1909).

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It was during this period that church buildings began to appear and were built with large audience rooms and conveniences for the love-feasts. These buildings were of a rectangular type, simple in style, with two front entrances—one for the men and the other for the women. Since there was considerable visiting from one church to another, especially at times of love-feasts, often the churches fitted the lofts for the entertainment of visiting members.

During this time the church developed a conformity to type that was to distinguish it in days to come. Fixed habits of life and custom were established at this time. The manner of dress came to be uniform. The dress of the men, the style of their hair and beards, the dresses of the sisters with their aprons, capes, and shawls gave them much the same appearance wherever they might be seen. Different communities might vary somewhat in some of these respects, but there was a tendency toward the same simplicity of attire in all the Brotherhood. It is said, however, that Brethren from different quarters of the Brotherhood could be easily distinguished by their slight variations in dress. This was especially interesting at the time of the Annual Meeting. Some of the ideas for dress doubtless were copied from the Quakers of colonial days who were given to simplicity of life and deportment.

As time passed, more and more concern was given to their attire in order that they might be differentiated from the people of the world who oftentimes regaled themselves in costly and vain array. The Brethren claimed to be "a peculiar people" and must therefore show their distinction in manner of dress, as well as in other ways. They established a form of dress in order not to be tempted to go along with the world with its hoop skirts, bustles, high sleeves, and low necklines. They professed to be a plain people. The matter of dress was only one expression of this plainness. They protested against doing like the world does. Anything that might be conducive to pride was eliminated from their lives—even to pictures on the walls of their homes, carpets on the floor, fine furniture, sleigh bells, and ornaments of various kinds, to say nothing of musi-

cal instruments in the churches. Sometimes we have wondered if at times these folk were not tempted to be proud of their humility! But it should be said in all fairness that they did not mean to be so.

To keep themselves separate from the world, the Brethren frowned upon holding public office of any kind and even upon voting in elections. It was deemed inadvisable in churches to have pulpits or elevated rostrums for the reason that they might tend to exalt a man. Education seems to have been looked down upon in this period. Whereas, in the days of the Macks and the Sowers, education was given a prominent place, in this period they were fearful of it. One query about members sending their sons to college received this answer: "Considered not advisable inasmuch as experience has taught that such very seldom come back afterward to the humble ways of the Lord."³ The same attitude prevailed with respect to high schools. This attitude could not help but have its effect upon the caliber of the church leadership and its ministry. But more of this later.

There was no regular monthly or weekly church paper coming into the homes of the Brethren at this time. This mitigated against unity and progress. Since the Revolutionary War, the Brethren had had little to do with printing. Once in a while a book or a pamphlet would be issued, such as Peter Nead's book called *Nead's Theology*, which appeared in 1850. The Brethren seemed to be afraid that the publication of a periodical in the Brotherhood would foster trouble in the church. When finally in 1851 Henry Kurtz began to issue the *Gospel Visitor*, the undertaking was begun only with the greatest caution, the conference of that year reluctantly giving permission for the venture.

Because of their attitude toward education and the publication of literature, the intellectual level of the membership of the church was kept low. We have only to imagine how impoverished we would be today without our schools and constant flow of literature, and in particular the Christian literature which is so available to us.

³ *Ibid.*, Article 1, 1831.

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Again, it is clear that during this period there were few Sunday schools. There was a prevalent feeling that Sunday schools were an innovation that tended toward worldliness and so they were frowned upon. In the Annual Meeting of 1838 a query was presented asking: "Whether it be right for members to take part in Sunday schools, class-meetings, and the like?" Plainly the conclusion was stated that it was "considered most advisable to take no part in such like things."⁴ This is a decline from the viewpoint in the colonial days when Hacker conducted a Sunday school in the Germantown church and even carried the idea to Ephrata. And, for our encouragement, it will not be the permanent attitude of the church which after the middle of the century came to see the importance of the Sunday-school ministry.

As late as 1844 the singing of the different parts, as in a quartet, was advised against. And in 1849 the conference advised against having their likeness or profile taken. Many other things of similar nature might be culled from the minutes of this period. But these examples will suffice to set forth the narrow and restricted viewpoint of the Brethren of this time. The church was crystallizing into a fixed order. It was restricted in vision. It needed an enlightened leadership to bring it out of its obscurity. The church seemed satisfied for the most part to shrink from society, to remain in the seclusion of the country. It needed to shake off its wilderness ways, and come to grips with the world to which the church is challenged to give the Gospel.

By the middle of the nineteenth century it can be seen that something approaching a legalistic view of salvation had developed, with its attendant emphasis upon traditional forms of dress, authority of church conferences, and opposition to educational and missionary activities. What has been said thus far in characterizing the period before us should not close our minds to some heroic men and efforts that blessed this period. To a few of these we wish now to turn our attention.

The work of George Wolfe, Jr. merits a bit of consideration.

⁴*Ibid.*, Article 10, 1838.

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In 1812 he was baptized by Elder John Hendricks and the next year he became an ordained elder. For over fifty years he labored in Illinois and vicinity in what was then the far west and he became a leader of a rather large group who came to be known as the Far Western Brethren. These folk were so far removed from the general Brotherhood and attended the Annual Meetings so infrequently that they developed a rather distinct character. For one thing they insisted on practicing the single mode in the feet-washing service, whereas the Brotherhood at large practiced the double mode. The situation caused no little commotion and, in 1831, a committee from Annual Meeting found them to be out of the prescribed order. Discussion of the matter continued for several years until in 1855 a compromise was effected to the end that when the Western Brethren communed with the Annual Meeting party, the double mode was to be observed. When by themselves, the single mode was to be permitted. Then, finally, in 1859 Annual Meeting granted full and complete recognition of the Far Western Brethren. And it is interesting to note that eventually the single mode, that is, the method whereby each participant washes and wipes the feet of another and has the same administered to him, came to be the method of the entire Brotherhood and is the method commonly observed in our churches today. It seems clear that this was the method observed at the beginning in the Germantown church. The second Alexander Mack was always in favor of the single mode and never allowed any other practice in the Germantown church.

It seems that the double mode, that is, the method whereby two Brethren both wash and wipe the feet of a number of participants and later on were relieved by two others who performed the rite upon a number of others, had its origin in the Coventry congregation under the direction of Martin Urner. So states Abraham H. Cassel, the great bibliographer of the Brethren church. It was taken up by the Conestoga congregation and the influence of Conrad Beissel is seen by many to be involved in this innovation. Since the two congre-

gations of Coventry and Conestoga were the great feeders of emigration, the double mode largely spread under their influence.

George Wolfe, the leader of the Far Western Brethren, was a remarkable man in many ways. He possessed a magnificent physique, being over six feet tall and weighing about 275 pounds. He was an eloquent speaker and well versed in the knowledge of the day, though he was not a man of the schools. He was a good debater. On one occasion he held a debate with a Catholic priest, the interest being so great that the governor of the state attended and afterwards commented regarding Wolfe's presentation of truth: "He is the profoundest man, for an illiterate man, I have ever heard." He did real missionary work over a wide territory for a period of thirty-five years. He did most of his traveling on horseback. He crossed the Ohio River many times in his travels. In 1853 the ferryman at Naples, Illinois, said: "I have ferried Elder Wolfe over the river nearly every year for the last twenty-five years." His preaching was simple, eloquent, and full of power. It is said that he made a great impression on Abraham Lincoln who knew him well. He died in 1865 and his tomb is at Libertyville, Illinois.

Another man who distinguished himself at this time and in this general area was Adam Paine (1780-1832). He had a burden for the Indians of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. He possessed a striking personality, having a large frame, high forehead, black piercing eyes, black hair and beard. It is said that his beard was fully two feet in length. He was both a good speaker and a fine singer. In 1830, at a council of Indians, he spoke as the council was about ready to open. His plea for peace carried and the council rejected the proposal made by Chief Black Hawk for a federation for war against the white man. The ministry of Paine, who also preached in the then tiny village of Chicago, shows the missionary spirit of the Brethren in these early days.

Elder Jacob Leatherman (1787-1863) was another man of this time who performed a ministry that helps to characterize

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the period of this chapter. He was known as the walking preacher. There is no record that he ever rode on horseback to fill his appointments. He filled appointments at five mission points in Maryland for fifty-six years. He never spared shoe leather in order to fulfill the ministry God gave to him, walking some 20,000 miles, it is estimated, in this ministry. One time he attended a love feast at Welty, fifteen miles from home. When someone asked him to stay over night, he replied: "Let the Brethren who have come a distance take my place. I will be back in the morning." He was back in time for Sunday morning services. He did more mission preaching than any other man in Maryland during his lifetime. He was a close friend of John Kline, who ministered so faithfully during those days. They often fellowshiped together. It is said that he had a great love for children and youth, who loved him in return. He wore a long beard which in later life turned white, giving him a venerable appearance.

This period dare not be passed without a word being written about Elder John Kline (1797-1864), who lived just a year beyond the time of Jacob Leatherman. Unlike the latter he did most of this traveling on horseback. It is estimated from his diary that he must have traveled at least 100,000 miles in his preaching tours and visits to churches and families, and most of this was done on horseback. His favorite riding mare "Nell" carried him 30,000 miles. In 1854 he traveled 6,643 miles, "mostly on Nell's back."⁵ He was born in Rockingham County, Virginia. He was a gifted man, being a farmer, traveler, physician, philanthropist, and preacher of the Gospel. He was not a man of the schools, being mainly self-taught.

He had an impressive personality. "The personal bearing of Benjamin Franklin before Parliament is not more worthy of a place in history than that of Elder John Kline before an audience. The lucid manner in which he unfolded his subject, his calm and collected demeanor, his immense store of Scriptural knowledge, and his intimate acquaintance with human

⁵ D. L. Miller and Galen Royer, *Some Who Led* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1912), p. 45.

nature gave his gospel ministry an influence that was immediate and lasting."⁶ Thus wrote a leader of the church of Kline's day. His preaching ministry began in 1835, and from then on he kept declaring the whole council of God. Some of his preaching tours took him on horseback through forest and plains, through valleys and over mountains, from Virginia to Indiana.

He spoke firmly against slavery. The Confederacy allowed him to cross the lines during the Civil War, every year of which he served as moderator of the Annual Conference. At the close of the Conference of 1864 at Hagerstown, Indiana, he gave a farewell message telling the audience that he felt it was the last time he would ever be with them. The following month, June, while returning to his home from the blacksmith shop where his faithful old Nell had been shod, he was shot down by assassins who hated him for his antislavery preaching. He was buried in the Linville, Virginia, cemetery, where a simple marble slab marks the last resting place of this brother, whom Holsinger speaks of as "the first Christian martyr of our church in America."⁷ The reading of the *Life and Labors of Elder John Kline, the Martyr Missionary* by Benjamin Funk will provide the reader with the real character of this great man, and much concerning the times in which he lived. The latter work was compiled from the diary of Kline, who kept his diary faithfully from the day he preached his first sermon, February 8, 1835.

It was during this period of the church's history that the first woman preacher appeared upon the scene. Her name was Sarah Righter Major (1808-1884). When eighteen years of age she became converted under the preaching of a woman by the name of Harriet Livermore. She was soon convinced that God had called her to preach. Her father, Elder Peter Keyser, a leading minister of the Brethren church in Philadelphia, of which she was a member, gave her kindly encouragement.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 348.

Hence she went forth to preach with mingled approval and disapproval.

She married Brother Thomas Major, a minister of the Brethren, who was willing that his wife should take the leadership in the matter of preaching. He accompanied her on preaching engagements and assisted her. When entering a place of worship, she would not take her place behind the stand but waited to be invited. Often her husband was asked to open the meeting, and then he gave her the floor. She sought to abide by Paul's teaching concerning married women. She was the picture of meekness and humility. Wherever she spoke she was urged to return. Though in a formal way she was never commissioned to preach, yet none forbade her to speak. And thus she became the first of a group of women preachers in the Brethren church, though in later years the church came to frown upon women preachers.

Mention was made in the former paragraph of a most remarkable man among the Brethren; namely, Peter Keyser (1766-1849). He was the elder and leader of the Germantown church for forty-seven years, and was the third elder of that church after its organization in 1723; he succeeded Alexander Mack in this capacity. He was one of the greatest orators that the Brethren ever produced and had a profound knowledge of the Scriptures. He drew large audiences and was considered generally as one of the great preachers of his time. In his later years he lost his eyesight, but this did not stop his ministry. He had memorized large portions of Scripture which aided him greatly during his years of blindness. Peter Keyser did much to connect the colonial and the early national periods of our church's history. No historical account of The Brethren Church would be complete without a recognition of his long and fruitful ministry.

In spite of what was formerly said with respect to Sunday schools in this period, it should be recognized that in the latter part of the period, in the eastern section of Pennsylvania at least, there was the beginning again of Sunday schools in a few places. This movement was destined to grow, for it came

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to be realized that it could be a strong right arm in forwarding the work of the church.

From time to time in the history of the Brethren, differences arose which resulted in withdrawals from the main body and the organization of new groups. Such a situation arose about the year 1845 of the period now under consideration in the Bachelor Run congregation of Carroll County, Indiana. Peter Eyman (sometimes spelled Oiman or Iman) was the leader of a divisive movement in this church. He held views which were at variance with the main body in respect to the ordinances, the name of the denomination, and the church order regarding dress. Being an elder of influence in the congregation, he gathered about him a following. Peter Replogle, another elder in the congregation, led the group which opposed Eyman and his faction.

As a result of this difficulty, the Bachelor Run church was divided into two camps with Peter Eyman maintaining the leadership in that church, and Peter Replogle ultimately becoming the shepherd of the Deer Creek congregation which was organized from the members of the Bachelor Run congregation who opposed Eyman. But this did not end the matter. Eyman associated with himself a young elder from another district by the name of George Patton who warmly espoused the ideas of the former. In 1848 Eyman and Patton with their followers decided to organize themselves into a separate denomination. They named themselves the Church of God. Besides this official name they have been more frequently called Eymanites, the Patton Brethren, or the New Dunkers. Because of the ensuing confusion in name with the Church of God whose headquarters is in Anderson, Indiana, the official name of the new denomination has been changed in recent years to The New Dunkard Church of God. The *Year Book of American Churches for 1957* lists them as having eight churches and an inclusive membership of 611.

They practice single backward immersion. At the time of communion they retain the table, but have no meal (love-feast). They observe feet-washing and the salutation of the

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kiss at that time, and believe in open communion. They do not oppose the legal oath, and they allow members to belong to any and all secret societies. They hold to no restrictions in dress. In most other respects they are in agreement with the general orthodox position.

This denomination persists to the present day. In the *United States Department of Commerce Census of Religious Bodies* the four major bodies of Tunkers are listed, the group under discussion being the fourth in the list. Because of its small size which prohibits a full-scale denominational program the New Dunkard Church of God has little hope of any appreciable growth.

In concluding this chapter, it should be said that though some have called this period of the church's history the lukewarm period and find in it little aggressiveness; yet it has been shown that there were certain individuals (and movements) within the church who were not lukewarm. Here and there were causes for encouragement. There were indications that in the days to come there would be a transformation that would bring with it a greater vigor and winsomeness.

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7

The Beginning of Progressivism (1851-1880)

The days immediately following the middle of the nineteenth century have been called the beginning of the progressive era in the Brethren church. From the American Revolution to this time was in many respects a dark period for our church. The membership became scattered. It did not mingle freely with the world nor fellowship with other denominations. It became so exclusive that it tended to become narrow, and its ministry became restricted. It became self-centered and lost its vision. The confiscation of the Sower press deprived the church of the printed page, which resulted in its indifference to education with the result that it frowned upon all secondary schools, as well as upon an educated ministry.

The decline, however, was arrested somewhat shortly after the middle of the nineteenth century. There were some far-seeing men who, during the preceding days, saw the downward trend. They were determined to do something about it. The improvement that was noted in the period from 1851 to 1876 was largely due to the vision of these men. It was Henry Holsinger (1833-1905), about whom we will hear much in the succeeding pages, who said that with the appearance of the *Gospel Visitor* in 1851 "was ushered in the progressive era in the Tunker Church."¹

The Gospel Visitor to which reference has just been made was the first publication in the Brotherhood since the days of Christopher Sower. It was a monthly magazine and indeed a

¹ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 470.

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small affair when compared with the Christian journals of today. But it became a mighty force among our people. It afforded the elements of acquaintance, communication, and co-operation so essential to every public cause. This first magazine paved the way for other magazines to follow, and thus it served to fulfill a crying need in the church which had been present for many decades. Imagine our church today with no magazines, Sunday-school quarterlies, or other publications!

The man to whom a large measure of the credit should go for starting this new venture is Henry Kurtz (1796-1874). He is the one man who revived interest in printing among the Brethren. Kurtz came from Germany to America in 1819, just a hundred years after the first group of Brethren came over with Peter Becker. However, when Kurtz came to this country he was not a Brethren. He was educated to be a Lutheran minister. But some time after he was in this country, and while he was pastor of a Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he became dissatisfied with some of the Lutheran doctrines, particularly that of infant baptism. He became convinced that it was wrong, with the result that he was excommunicated for his views. Then he and his wife, Anna Catherine, moved to the "Ohio wilderness," there to carve out for themselves a home and a livelihood. They situated first in Columbiana County in the fall of 1826. The following spring they moved on to Stark County to the vicinity of Canton. This situation brought him into vital contact with Elder George Hoke, a remarkable preacher of those days, and held in such esteem by his brethren that he was chosen moderator of the Annual Meeting eleven times.

Under Hoke's preaching and personal attention Henry Kurtz cast in his lot with the Brethren in 1828 and forthwith began to serve the church of his choice with vigor and wisdom. A kind of David and Jonathan friendship grew between Kurtz and Hoke. It was to Hoke that Kurtz first made known the burden of his heart to see a paper produced for the benefit of the Brethren church. He is supposed to have conversed with his friend Hoke like this: "Here is something that

appeals to me. Suppose someone were to publish a paper for the Brethren that could be sent far and wide to all the Brethren. In this way it would be possible to touch all homes, not just once a year as some are reached through the Big Meeting, but all homes and as many as a dozen times a year! Think what a medium such a paper would be for the exchange of thought, for retelling the story of the faith of the founders! It could prepare the people for the problems of change and adjustment which are sure to multiply in this new land of ours.”²

George Hoke realized the truth of what Kurtz was saying and was deeply impressed with his sincerity. But he was not sure that the time was ripe for such a venture. He knew how slow the Brethren were to take up new things and how fixed they were in their ways. And so the days and years passed by and nothing of much consequence developed along this line for some years. Two abortive efforts at printing were tried in 1833 and 1836, but not until 1851 did real success crown his efforts.

In April of that year the first issue of the *Gospel Visitor* appeared. Henry Kurtz had decided not to wait for any Annual Meeting action for the production of this magazine, but to attempt it by himself and see what the results would be. A passage of Scripture kept sounding in his heart compelling him to action. It was: “He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”³ Thus from the second floor of a small springhouse on his farm near Poland, Ohio, came forth the harbinger of a better day. On the first page were inscribed these words: “The Monthly Gospel Visitor, Volume I, Number I, April, 1851.” This was truly another red-letter day in Brethren history! However, there was not wholehearted support of the paper on the part of the Brotherhood. The Annual Meeting did not stand in the way of its publication, but did nothing in particular to boost its publication. Hence by August of 1855, over four years after the first issue, the circulation

² Harry A. Brandt, *Meet Henry Kurtz* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1941), p. 64.

³ James 4:17.

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was nearing only the 600 mark, but this was a beginning. It marked a turning point in the life of the church.

One result of the new publication was the discovery in 1855 of James Quinter (1816-1888), assistant clerk of annual conference, and Henry R. Holsinger in 1856 to serve in helping to publish the magazine. Holsinger soon became restless under the slow progress of the magazine and urged that the *Gospel Visitor* become a weekly magazine with an open forum to stir up interest. Kurtz could not agree that the time was yet ready for such drastic changes. Climaxing his convictions Holsinger founded the *Christian Family Companion* as a weekly magazine on January 3, 1865, having learned all he knew about printing in the office of the *Gospel Visitor*.

The new magazine was first published at Tyrone, Pennsylvania, and was the first weekly magazine published by the Brethren. The magazine met with remarkable success at the beginning. Holsinger opened a free rostrum in his paper for the discussion of all subjects pertaining to the welfare of the church. This created real interest. Many personalities were introduced as writers in the magazine, and each article in the rostrum had to be signed by its contributor. New ideas were advocated in the paper, such as an educated and paid ministry, and emancipation from the old order in dress. At the close of 1873, James Quinter secured full control of the *Christian Family Companion* and the *Gospel Visitor* and united them into one weekly, and after 1876 called it the *Primitive Christian*.

1877 the *Primitive Christian* and *Pilgrim* (1870) combined under James Quinter, H. B., and J. B. Brumbaugh. Then of major significance was the beginning of the publication of the *Progressive Christian* in 1878 by Henry Holsinger and Joseph W. Beer. As its name indicates, its avowed purpose was the advocacy of progressive measures and ideas. The Annual Meeting of 1879 promptly denounced the magazine as the cause of disruption in the Brotherhood.

Other periodicals appeared during this period—*The Vindicator* (1870), a radically conservative paper which in 1877

became the official organ of the Old Order German Baptists; *Pious Youth* (1870), *Children's Magazine* (1873), *Young Disciple* (1876), *Brethren's Messenger* (1876), *Brethren at Work* (1876), *Brethren's Advocate* (1877), *Deacon* (1878), *Children at Work* (1878), *Our Sunday School* (1879), *Gospel Preacher* (1879), and *Home Mirror* (1879). Thus with all these periodicals, even though some of them did not continue long, it is quite evident that a new day had dawned in the Brethren church.

A second indication that a progressive spirit was abroad was the renewed activity in church schools. Prior to this there had been the feeling that institutions of higher learning tended toward pride and conformity to the world. Even as late as 1853, in response to a query sent in to the Annual Meeting this conclusion was handed down: "Considered that we would deem colleges a very unsafe place for a simple follower of Christ, inasmuch as they are calculated to lead us astray from the faith and obedience to the Gospel."⁴ But several efforts were put forth to accomplish something of this nature. Jacob Miller, of Buffalo Mills, Pennsylvania (Bedford County), blazed the trail in this respect. Being a public-school teacher in Pennsylvania for several years with marked success, he became impressed with the idea that he ought to devote his ability toward lifting the standard of education among the young people of his own church. In the summer of 1852 he erected a building at his own expense for the purpose. At the outset the school proved popular, but it lasted for only one year because of the illness and subsequent death of its founder.

But the new spirit was not to be denied. Another effort was made in 1859 in Rockingham County, Virginia, near Broadway. A large building was provided, and the school was named Cedar Grove Seminary. John Kline, John J. Bowman, and Daniel Miller were leaders in the movement. These two schools just mentioned were strictly of the academic type but gave work considerably in advance of the public schools of

⁴ *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren*, Article 28, 1853. (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1909).

their day and restricted the curriculum to English subjects. This second school, like the former, did not last long.

A third attempt was made in April 1861, in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, when Professor S. Z. Sharp took charge of the Kishacoquillas Seminary and made it a Brethren school. It seemed well on the way to prosperity; it had a good group of students and an ambitious curriculum, including higher mathematics, foreign languages, and the sciences. It prepared students for the colleges and added the freshman year of the regular college course. But its life was brief and after five years it had to close its doors for lack of patronage.

Those Brethren who believed in the importance of raising the level of education in the church refused to be discouraged. In the fall of 1861 at New Vienna, Ohio, the New Vienna Academy was opened by James Quinter and others. We have met Elder Quinter formerly in his association with Henry Kurtz on the *Gospel Visitor*. The school lasted for about four years, when it died for the same reason as the others. The Brethren at large were slow to see the advantages of educational opportunities. But the encouraging thing about it all was that there was a new viewpoint present in the Brotherhood which in the end was bound to bear fruit.

The next effort was put forth at Bourbon, Indiana. This school opened in the fall of 1870 and was the first attempt of the Brethren to establish a college. Certain Brethren in the vicinity of Bourbon secured the property of another college which had failed and named their school Salem College, with Oliver W. Miller as president. It was extensively advertised as of equal rank with the best colleges of Europe and America. Besides offering a college course, it provided for an academy, a commercial school, a school of music, and a school of painting. The tuition per term at Salem varied from seven to fifteen dollars, depending on the department (academic or collegiate) in which the student was enrolled. But it was the same story again. The school, in spite of a seemingly auspicious program, lasted only four years and then closed its doors because of difficulties and lack of financial support. The

Brethren as a whole were still not persuaded as to the advisability of secular education sponsored by the church.

Another effort which proved of short duration was Pleasant Hill College at Warsaw, Indiana, which began in 1871 and discontinued in 1872.

Still another attempt was made in the direction of fuller education at Berlin, Pennsylvania, where in 1872 the Brethren High School was organized, but it never really materialized due to unfortunate circumstances. H. R. Holsinger and S. Z. Sharp led in this effort.

It was during this same quarter century that J. G. Royer developed a normal school at Burnettsville, in western Indiana, which enjoyed unusual success for several years, 1872-1875. In 1874 Howard Miller and Lewis Kimmel began another normal school at the Plum Creek Church, near Elderton, Pennsylvania. It was called the Plum Creek Normal School. They used the church as the schoolhouse. This latter fact is suggestive of the Brethren idea of education. It was to be simply the handmaid of the church. The Elderton school operated until 1878.

But the flame of education was still burning in the hearts of many. The next evidence of the fact was the establishment of the Huntingdon Normal School and Collegiate Institute in 1876. This was the first effort which met with lasting success and developed into Juniata College. The success at Huntingdon inspired enthusiasm in the matter of education throughout the Brotherhood. Ashland College came into existence in 1878, being chartered by the German Baptist Church in the state of Ohio. About the same time, in 1879, Mount Morris Seminary and Collegiate Institute was organized at Mount Morris, Illinois; the buildings had previously belonged to the Methodists. It later came to be called Mount Morris College and continued until 1932 when it merged with Manchester College at North Manchester, Indiana. Thus it is apparent that the Brotherhood at long last had come to the place where it realized that proper consideration must be given to the education of its young people if it was to develop a strong church. If only

the church had always maintained a proper Christian emphasis in its schools!

The progressive attitude of the Brethren during this quarter of a century is also reflected in their growing appreciation of the Sunday school. Whereas, prior to 1850 it was considered inadvisable for Brethren to take part in Sunday-school work, by the year 1875 Sunday schools were operating in almost all sections of the Brotherhood. A significant action was taken by the Annual Meeting of 1857 which shows clearly a new trend. A query was presented to that conference as follows: "How is it considered for brethren to have Sabbath schools, conducted by brethren?" The answer was: "Inasmuch as we are commanded to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we know of no Scripture which condemns Sabbath schools, if conducted in gospel order, and if they are made the means of teaching scholars a knowledge of the Scriptures."⁵

It is gratifying also to note that during the period before us there was evident a growing concern for the spread of the Gospel. It was in this period that the first foreign missionary program was begun. Before this time Brethren people had done missionary work. They felt the missionary impulse in Germany and got into trouble because they sought to add to their numbers through evangelism. They did missionary work when they came to these shores. But so far their mission fields were always adjacent to them. To a large extent America in the early days was a mission field. The Brethren tackled some of the problems relative to it. Only slowly was their attention directed to the regions beyond. But in fairness it should be recalled that not until the early part of the nineteenth century did the modern missionary enterprise begin in America in connection with the incident of Samuel Mills and the famous Haystack Prayer Meeting.

It is gratifying to note that near the beginning of our period of consideration there was an encouraging "stirring in the tops of the mulberry trees" with respect to missionary respon-

⁵*Ibid.*, Article 11, 1857.

sibility. In the conference minutes of 1852 there was a definite acknowledgment of foreign missionary responsibility. Nothing specific was done about it and as Galen Royer says: "The prevailing sentiment was far from missionary."⁶ The church felt that its main duty was to conserve the faith, rather than to spread it. However, it was noteworthy that they were at least beginning to think more definitely about the matter. In 1853 they expressed themselves to the effect that Brethren emigrating westward would do well to situate themselves advantageously to evangelism. In the Meeting of 1856⁷ the Virginia Brethren urged the conference not to let the former good ideas of evangelism remain "a dead letter." But still nothing definite was planned in the way of a program. However, articles on the responsibility to missions were now appearing in the *Gospel Visitor* and elsewhere.

The writer of these words has before him a worn copy of the October 1856 issue of the *Gospel Visitor* in which there is a stirring article on the subject of worldwide dissemination of the Gospel and urging the Brotherhood to do something about it. The writer of the article, who signed himself "Eubulus," pleads with the church to overcome all obstacles and carry out the Lord's plan as expressed in the Great Commission. "Let us not be at ease in Zion, until something is done towards accomplishing this glorious object; lest that woe will be inflicted upon us pronounced by the prophet, upon those that are at ease in Zion. I trust there are brethren who would be willing to sacrifice ease and comfort, yea, to forsake all for Christ's sake, in order to promulgate the Gospel in its purity and simplicity, in such places where it never before was so published."⁷

It was at the conference of 1858 that Elder John Wise presented the first request to have a general mission board so as to have a more united missionary effort. Although no definite action was taken, the request had a stimulating effect. The

⁶ Galen B. Royer, *Thirty-Three Years of Missions in the Church of the Brethren* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1913), p. 34.

⁷ Eubulus, "Propagation of the Kingdom of Christ," *The Monthly Gospel-Visitor*, October, 1856, p. 265.

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Civil War with all the problems it brought, intervened. At its close the obligation was not lost sight of. The Brethren felt that the idea of spreading the Gospel was a good thing but thought they should be cautious. Following 1868 the Brotherhood was divided into districts for the purpose of the extension of the Gospel.

This latter venture proved successful, for it was the district of Illinois which formed the first foreign-mission board in the Brethren church in November of 1875. This board became instrumental in beginning the first foreign-mission work among the Brethren in 1876 and sent Christian Hope (1844-1899) to Denmark in that year. In May of 1880 the Domestic and Foreign Mission Board was organized by the Annual Meeting. This latter Board then took over the work of the Danish Mission. The mission in Denmark produced only very meager results in spite of the zealous efforts of Hope and his associates, but it served to enlarge the missionary vision of the Brethren. Following the division of 1881-1883, later to be considered, this work was supervised by the General Mission Board of the Church of the Brethren with very little success. Following the Board's investigation of the field in 1924 through a personal visit by its educational secretary, the missionaries on the field were recalled, and the work was left in charge of the native leaders of the Scandinavian Church of the Brethren. This is the status at the present time.

Therefore, it is plain to see that the Brethren were slowly awakening to their missionary responsibility. At the close of this quarter century (1851-1876), there was much land yet to be possessed, but at least the Brethren had their attention set upon the right thing.

Ere we bring this chapter to a close we want to notice the progress the Brethren made during this period in extending their borders. From the central states the Brethren had penetrated to the west and to the north by the end of the first half of the nineteenth century. They often traveled by means of the covered wagon, or the "prairie schooner," as it was often called.

In 1844 George Wolfe of Illinois organized the first church

in Iowa, at Libertyville, with John Garber taking charge. This was the first church to be organized west of the Missouri after the Cape Girardeau congregation of Missouri ceased to operate. In 1858 Libertyville and Dry Creek built the first Brethren meeting houses west of the Mississippi. Other congregations began to appear rapidly in this area. The first two congregations in Minnesota were organized in 1856 at Root River and Lewiston.

As for the Brethren occupation of Kansas we are indebted to Elder Jacob Ulrich of the Nettle Creek congregation in Indiana, who led a colony westward in a covered wagon caravan. In the summer of 1856, a congregation was organized at Cottonwood, near Emporia. After the second congregation in the state was organized at Washington Creek in 1858, other congregations came into being. Oregon seems to have been the next state occupied, though it is a long way from Kansas to Oregon. This was accomplished under the leadership of Daniel Leedy, from Iowa, in the year 1856. The first congregation organized in Oregon was named South Santaam, later renamed Willamette Valley.

California, with its lure, beckoned to Brethren about the same time. The third George Wolfe left Illinois for California in 1856. Under his influence the first Brethren group was organized in a grove near Monterey, Santa Clara County. The congregation migrated to San Joaquin County and became known as the Church of California. The Brethren organized their first congregation in southern California in 1885 at Covina.

The first Brethren congregation organized in Nebraska was in 1866 or 1868 at Ball Creek, near Fontanelle, Washington County. Michigan had scattered members as early as 1864, but Thornapple and Woodland, organized in 1868 and 1874 respectively, are the first congregations of which we know. As early as 1854 Wisconsin had an organized Brethren congregation at Ash Ridge, which was connected with the early movement in Illinois.

In the State of Washington there was an organized church by 1876. It came into being largely through the efforts of

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David Brower, who was active in the work in Oregon. It was called the Pataka congregation. It, however, disorganized in two years and Brower was instrumental in organizing the Klichitat Valley Church in 1880.

The Brethren organized their first Colorado congregation at St. Vrain, near Longmont, in 1877, under the leadership of J. S. Flory and George Fesler. It was David Brower who organized the first congregation in Palouse Valley, Idaho, in 1878, near the Washington border. Shortly following this time churches were also organized in Texas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, and even in Canada.

From this hasty geographical sketch it can readily be seen that the Brethren church was reaching out during this period. Its time of stagnation was past. It had its face turned toward the future. This was true in spite of the fact that in the midst of the period came the Civil War which subjected many of the Brethren to severe hardships because of their convictions on the matter of war. Some had to go to prison, others had to buy their freedom at heavy prices. Still others had to pay substitutes at \$800 to \$1500 and a few were forcibly drafted into the army. All were subjected to ridicule and misunderstanding. Those who were forced into the army were obedient to every command, save to shoot down their fellow man. It was at this time that General T. J. Jackson made the somewhat famous statement: "There lives a people in the Valley of Virginia, that are not hard to bring to the army. While there they are obedient to their officers. Nor is it difficult to have them take aim, but it is impossible to get them to take correct aim. I, therefore, think it better to have them at their homes that they may produce supplies for the army."⁸

It is well to remember that the Brethren modified their name just a bit during this period. In 1871 they decided to call themselves the *German Baptist Brethren*. This latest name recognizes the prevailing German element in their constituency though by now the church is beginning to attract to itself more

⁸D. H. Zigler, *A History of the Church of the Brethren in Virginia* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1908), p. 98.

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of an English element and some of the services are held in English, as well as German. The title continues to stress the Baptist character of the group and, of course, they still cling to the New Testament name, Brethren. They would cling to that title no matter what other changes appeared.

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Division in the Ranks (1881-1882)

8

The progressive spirit that we found to be so manifest in the years following 1851, when the *Gospel Visitor* first made its appearance, was met with definite opposition. Some felt that everything in the way of progress was fraught with danger and so opposed it. Others felt that a measure of progress was to be countenanced but that it must be carefully guarded. As a result there was much contention prevalent between the different viewpoints, which resulted in a three-way division in 1881-1882. There were the ultra-conservatives who withdrew from the main body and organized themselves on November 25, 1881, into a separate group called the Old German Baptist Brethren. They are commonly referred to as Old Orders for the reason that they have stood by the old ways and refused any innovations. Among other things they opposed high schools and colleges, Sunday schools, and missions.

Then there were the conservatives, who were usually referred to as German Baptists. These formed the main body of the church. The third group were the progressives, who were expelled by the German Baptists in May 1882, for their progressive ideas, and who organized The Brethren Church in 1883 as nearly as possible on the original platform of New Testament Christianity without undue emphasis upon externalities. It is with the latter group that the viewpoint of this book is mainly concerned.

Let us trace the development leading to the division to which we have just referred. Some progressive ideas had been presented in the *Gospel Visitor* which began in 1851. Still others

appeared in the weekly *Christian Family Companion*, which began its existence in 1865 and which was published by Henry Holsinger. This paper provided a free rostrum for the airing of the progressive views in the church. But with the appearance of the *Progressive Christian* in 1878, a paper edited by J. W. Beer and Holsinger, a crisis soon developed. In these publications attention was called to the glaring deficiencies in the church in the way of education, incompetent elders, parsimonious giving, undue stress on the matter of dress, the increasing authority being assumed by the Annual Meeting with its Standing Committee, and reticence in forwarding Sunday school and missionary work.

Henry Holsinger in particular could not tolerate tardiness in forwarding the Lord's work. He hated the emphasis that was being placed upon externalities in the church to the exclusion of the more important matters of the Spirit. Sometimes in his speaking and writing he was too blunt and lacking in tact, but at least everyone knew where he stood, and he was utterly earnest and sincere. Henry Holsinger became the foremost champion of the progressive ideas in the church. By progressivism it should be clearly understood that matters of doctrinal belief were not under consideration. It had no relationship to present-day modernism. It had to do with church practice and policy.

In one issue of the *Progressive Christian*, Holsinger created a great stir by an article he wrote on the subject "Is the Standing Committee a Secret Organization?" In this article he showed six respects in which this powerful committee of the Annual Meeting had become similar to Royal Arch Masonry! He objected especially to the authority and secrecy of the Standing Committee. Of course, such an article brought down upon Holsinger's head the wrath of many. It hastened the crystallizing of the situation against him. He became a marked man in the church. The viewpoint that he represented gathered to itself a host of enemies. However, Holsinger was not without a multitude of supporters.

The difficulty was finally brought to a focus at the Annual

Meeting of 1881, held at Ashland, Ohio. At that conference no less than five district conferences presented condemnations against the *Progressive Christian* and its editor. The one from southern Ohio similar in content to the others read as follows:

Whereas H. R. Holsinger is publishing articles in his paper which have a tendency to bring about discord among the Brethren, and have a bad influence outside of the Brotherhood, we request therefore that a committee be appointed whose duty it shall be to take notice of that paper, and if articles still continue to appear contrary to the faith and practice of the Church, that it shall be their duty to bring said Holsinger to an account as in their judgment they may deem proper and right.¹

These several documents were declared to be the property of the conference. The conference appointed a committee to take charge of the papers. The latter committee, after studying the matter, recommended on the third day that the Annual Meeting appoint a special committee to wait on Holsinger in his church at Berlin, Pennsylvania, and deal with him according to his transgressions. This resulted in the appointment of the famous "Berlin Committee" composed of John Wise, Enoch Eby, David Long, Joseph Kauffman, and Christian Bucher. The matters specified against Holsinger were that he had been publishing articles in his paper criticising the work of the Annual Meeting, the order of our church government, the principle of nonconformity to the world in wearing apparel, and that this had been done after repeated admonitions.

The committee visited the Berlin church the ninth and tenth of August 1881. The writer has before him the *Stenographic Report of the Proceedings of the Committee for the Trial of Elder H. R. Holsinger, for Insubordination to the Traditions of the Elders*. After the opening exercises in which Elder James Quinter read John, Chapter 17, it was ascertained by the visiting committee that they were received by the church. This was about the only point on which there was agreement between the opposing parties. The committee did not like the place where the meeting was held and objected. They objected

¹ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 497.

to the employment of a stenographer to take down all the proceedings in the trial, a procedure of which they had not been advised previously.

The committee claimed that it was a departure from the general usage of the church. But Holsinger held that this was a unique trial and deserved to be known in all of its particulars, even to the publishing of the same. The committee objected because the council was open to others besides the members of the congregation. Holsinger held that since he had been charged publicly there was no reason why he should not be tried publicly. After all, there should be nothing to hide. He did make plain, however, that only members would have a right to vote. In all the proceedings it must have been gratifying to Holsinger to have had the wholehearted backing of his own membership.

The entire time was taken up with haggling over the "usages of the church" with the end result that at the conclusion of the affair the report of the Berlin Committee was as follows:

In view of the above considerations, (Holsinger's failure to abide by the usages of the church) especially in view of the fact that Brother H. R. Holsinger refused to have his case investigated by the committee in harmony with the gospel as interpreted by our Annual Meeting, and the consent of our general brotherhood, and inasmuch as Brother H. R. Holsinger and the Berlin Church assumed all responsibility in the case, therefore we decided that Brother H. R. Holsinger can not be held in fellowship in the Brotherhood, and all who depart with him shall be held responsible to the action of the next meeting.²

In short, they considered Holsinger guilty of insubordination to the traditions of the elders. He could not tolerate the externalities and legalism that had developed within the church.

The seriousness of the above action becomes apparent when it is realized that "it became the entering wedge which divided a large denomination, one part of which became a new organization."³ Though the committee did not come to grips with the matters with which Holsinger had been charged, yet it was

² *Ibid.*, p. 502.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 504.

perfectly clear by now that there were two viewpoints within the church which could not be harmonized. The one viewpoint represented by the main body of the church was dominated by externals, the importance of forms and ceremony. It was legalistic. The other viewpoint, represented by Holsinger and his followers, was dominated by the spirit of the Gospel, by the liberty that there is in Christ Jesus, and by the idea of the sovereignty of the local church.

Following the work of the committee, the Berlin church passed the following resolution unanimously:

Inasmuch as Elder H. R. Holsinger has not violated any gospel order of the general brotherhood, and not having had a trial of the charges brought against him at the Annual Meeting of 1881, therefore the Berlin Congregation, including the Meyersdale branch, will continue to work together with Brother Holsinger as our bishop, and we invite all who are willing to take the Gospel of Christ as the man of their counsel, into church fellowship with us.⁴

This action of the Berlin church brought courage to the heart of Holsinger. He was not alone in his struggle for progressiveness. He did not know just what the future held, but God always makes a way for the man who has convictions and the courage to stand by them.

The next episode in the drama was to take place at the following Annual Meeting in May of 1882. During the intervening time between the decision of the committee and Annual Meeting there was much controversy gathering about the person and ideas of Holsinger. Many pondered the question as to what was the position of Holsinger in view of the committee's action. Stephen H. Bashor (b. 1852), prominent preacher and evangelist who had progressive ideas, wrote a tract upon the subject, "Where is Holsinger?" in which he dealt with the question, was he still in the church or not? The next Annual Meeting would give the answer. This tract was distributed by the thousands throughout the Brotherhood. All church periodicals entered into a consideration of the subject. Holsinger himself could not be expected to keep an idle pen.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 508.

As a result of the many printed discussions of the matters at hand, the *Progressive Christian* enjoyed a greatly increased circulation.

Professor Howard Miller, for a time associate editor of the *Progressive Christian* and a brilliant writer, wrote an extended article in the *Progressive Christian* during this time which graphically portrayed the existing situation. In this article, in two sentences, he pretty well summarized the reason for the difficulty in which Holsinger found himself: "Divested of all its verbiage, the trouble with Henry is that he is now, 'and always has been, too far ahead of his day and generation. The other side of the house would put this to the credit of his being wickedly fast.'" By being fast Miller meant, of course, that his ideas and methods were in advance of the major portion of the church constituency. "Holsinger's morals or faith were not questioned. He was shelved because he presumed to question the wisdom of his fellows,"⁵ was a further statement in Miller's pointed article.

Tremendous feeling had developed by the time the Annual Meeting convened at Arnold's Grove, near Milford, Indiana, at the present junction of Indiana State Highway 15 and U. S. Highway 6. The grove is now gone, but residents of the vicinity can describe the scene of the conference. An eye-witness of the conference, writing in *The Farmer's Exchange* published in New Paris, Indiana, estimates the attendance at 10,000. He says that about thirty-five acres of ground were used in handling the conference. A large tent was erected with a seating capacity of 5,000 inside and seats all around the outside. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad built one and one-half miles of new track from their main line so they could land their passengers on the meeting ground. The church building, now known as Bethany Church of the Brethren, of which the writer of the above mentioned article was a member until the time of his death in April 1957, and the houses and barns for miles around were used for sleeping quarters. One field was used for horses and wagons since many people came

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

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many miles and stayed for the entire nine-day conference.

This sort of thing was characteristic of the way the conferences were held from year to year in those days. However the 1882 conference appears to have been one of the largest, if not the largest, held up to that time. Tremendous issues were involved.

The case involving Holsinger was opened by a reading of the report of the Berlin Committee. The chairman of the committee, John Wise (1822-1909), gave a somewhat lengthy explanation, after which a motion was quickly made and seconded to adopt the report of the committee. Friends of Holsinger at this point presented a compromise paper in which Holsinger made some rather amazing offers, and which the latter had agreed to sign if acceptable to the meeting, but after much discussion the conference refused to accept it. Its mind was already fixed. Some felt that a great mistake was made in not accepting this paper. However, it is doubtful that such acceptance would have solved the situation. Convictions and differences were too deep seated. The most that it could have done would have been to delay the day of settlement.

It was evident that the mind of the body was made up as to its treatment of Holsinger. There was no disposition to allow the latter to speak in his own defense. There were quite a few who spoke in defense of Holsinger, and they felt that a little delay should be given before the matter was voted upon. Among these were D. C. Moomaw, P. J. Brown, Robert H. Miller, George Hanawalt, A. J. Hickson, and W. R. Deeter. Those favoring a bit of delay in taking action pointed out that not only was Henry Holsinger under consideration, but hundreds of others would be involved in any action taken against Holsinger. The major portion of the body was in favor of a quick adoption of the report which entailed Holsinger's expulsion from the church. Among those speaking to this end were John Wise, Daniel Sayler, Samuel Mohler, Jacob Rife, and Daniel Vaniman. And so the report was adopted and Holsinger was expelled.

The issue was clearly defined. It was not simply a matter

of having or not having a stenographer take notes, as the unfortunate Berlin Conference might seem to have indicated. It was not simply a matter of the advisability of doing business before an open council or a closed council. It was far deeper than these surface matters. It had to do with the progress of the Gospel. It was an issue between externals and the true spirit that lies behind the externals. It was a contest between legalism and liberty. It was a conflict between the rules and organizations of men and the Word and freedom of the Gospel, between a negative and a positive Christianity.

Following his expulsion, Holsinger walked out from under the council tent. He thought mainly about his loyal Berlin congregation. "On entering the vast throng outside," he said, "I was greeted by many of my friends and brethren and patrons, who offered words of encouragement and approbation. After consultations it was agreed to call a public meeting on Tuesday evening, May 30, at a schoolhouse a mile west of the place of conference, for the purpose of consulting upon the proper step to be taken. It seems prudent to state at this period that I was the least interested among all the aggrieved progressive brethren. I have, therefore, to thank my friends for my salvation in that dark hour of temptation. He who was merciful to the thief on the cross, caused the hearts of His own to have compassion on him who erstwhile would have been an outcast and wanderer."^a

The meeting of those who were sympathetic with Holsinger's viewpoint was held as stated above on the evening of May 30, at schoolhouse No. 7 (or the Clayton School), a mile west of Arnold's Grove. The location is on the present U. S. Highway 6. The schoolhouse has disappeared, but the memories still linger, and Holsinger has left us a picture of it in his monumental history on page 471. Holsinger himself is included in the picture, together with a number of his followers. Statistics were not kept at this juncture, but there was a good attendance present. J. H. Moore in his graphic account as an eyewitness of the proceedings of Holsinger's expulsion says

^a*Ibid.*, p. 525.

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that when the vote was put "only about 100" opposed the motion. However, he indicates that Holsinger soon had other sympathizers.⁷

The purpose of the meeting was to consider what course of action should be taken by those who had been expelled from the church. Elder P. J. Brown (1827-1902), a stalwart defender of the faith whose judgment was always appreciated, was called upon to act as chairman. Brown was definitely one of the founding fathers of the Progressive Brethren Movement. A resolution of sympathy was passed for Brother Holsinger with the following interesting wording: "That we extend to Brother Holsinger our Christian sympathy, and until he is guilty of a violation of the Gospel or well-defined moral principle, we will consider him as illegally expelled."⁸ A committee was appointed to draft a memorial to the Standing Committee with a view to making one more effort to prevent division in the church. The committee did its work, but with no success, and reported the same to the schoolhouse group two days later. The Standing Committee of Conference related that they could not do anything because the memorial had not come through a regular district meeting or conference. This was a convenient way of dismissing the matter, and it demonstrated the fixed legal machinery by which the church was now operating.

Holsinger and his sympathizers were by this time convinced that they had done all that they could to bring about a reconciliation. They felt constrained to proceed to some definite action for their own benefit. They adopted a set of resolutions which clearly presented the reason for their separation from the main body of the church, and which charted their future course in a general way. They adopted as their motto: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." Moreover, they decided to hold a convention of Holsinger's sympathizers at a later time when all of those of like faith and viewpoint

⁷ J. H. Moore, *Some Brethren Pathfinders* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1929), p. 334.

⁸ Henry R. Holsinger, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

could be present to discuss plans for the future. The place and date decided upon were Ashland, Ohio, June 29, 1882.

Thus in about four weeks following the meeting at Schoolhouse No. 7 "those favorable to restoring the church to its primitive purity"⁹ gathered in the chapel of Founders Hall at Ashland College for a two-day convention. This has often been called the first conference of the Progressive Brethren.

However, it was not the first conference of The Brethren Church, which was officially organized during the following June of 1883. This organization will be the subject of our next chapter.

At this first Progressive Conference, Elder J. W. Beer presided and stated the purpose of the convention. Letters were read from persons who were in harmony with the progressive group but who could not be present. Note was taken of the people who were present and the churches they represented.

The conference adopted a set of principles upon which they would operate in the future; namely, adherence to Gospel or New Testament principles, congregational church government, extensive evangelization, and adherence to the simplicity of the Christian faith as held by the originators of the church.

The spirit of these principles is clearly displayed in the following two statements:

We therefore reaffirm the primitive doctrines of the church, and disavow allegiance to all such derogatory and subversive ecclesiastical mandates (mandatory decisions of Annual Meetings), and declare our intention to administer the government of the church as in the days of the apostles and our faithful brotherhood.

We thus denounce mandatory legislation, creeds, and everything that may be construed to holding anything as essential to salvation, except the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), and thus declare ourselves as being the only true conservators and perpetuators of the Brotherhood and its original doctrines and principles, and are therefore the original and true church.¹⁰

The progressives expressed that their aim was to cleanse, not divide. They had no desire for a separate denomination,

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 529.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 535.

but they were convinced that the main body of the church had corrupted itself by departing from the first principles of the Gospel and bringing in unscriptural forms and innovations which destroyed the pure testimony of Christ, and unless it reformed in these matters the progressives could not remain in their fellowship. At this conference the progressives were still hoping that the Annual Meeting group would correct their errors so that there would be no necessity for permanent division in the church. However, hopes for this realization were steadily becoming dimmer. With this fading hope before them, a committee was appointed with the authority to call another convention when the exigencies of the fraternity seemed to demand it. Thus the door was left ajar but was fast closing for union of the two bodies.

In summary, what was the exact situation as of June 30, 1882? First of all, a group of ultra-conservatives, officially called Old German Baptist Brethren, but more commonly Old Orders, had withdrawn from the main body of Tunkers or German Baptist Brethren in November 1881. They could not go along with the so-called fast elements that they saw increasing in the church. They frowned upon higher education, Sunday schools, modern church equipment, revival meetings, manmade boards, paid ministers, organized mission work, and other "worldly" innovations that they found creeping into the church. It is estimated that in 1881 they numbered about 5000, mostly located in the Miami Valley of Ohio and adjacent territory. Then there was the Progressive group which was expelled from the main body because of reasons outlined in this chapter. They reacted in the opposite direction from the main group as compared to the Old Orders. This group remained throughout 1882 as an unorganized group, holding for rectification of the prevailing wrongs as they saw them and union with the main body. However, hope was fast diminishing. There was also the main body of the church, which was to continue on without much change.

Church divisions always bring much misunderstanding and heartbreak. It was so in the denominational difficulties just

related. J. H. Moore, in a chapter entitled "Rocking the Old Ship," refers to it as the "saddest period ever known in the history of the Church of the Brethren."¹¹ Mistakes were doubtless committed on both sides of the controversy. Holsinger at times was unquestionably too outspoken, aggressive, and caustic in his remarks. Like Peter of old, he was quite impulsive, and often spoke and wrote before thinking things through. But he was a good man who loved the Lord, and the things for which he stood were right, as time has revealed. Yes; the days were dark. But, as it is often true that it is darkest just before the dawn, so in our next chapter we shall observe the coming of a new day.

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¹¹ J. H. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

*The Organization of
the Brethren Church
(1883)*

9

June 6, 1883, is the birth date of The Brethren Church as a denominational organization. The place of the birth was in what was then called Music Hall, in Dayton, Ohio. The old building since has burned, but the location is in the one hundred block on North Main Street where the New Victory theater now stands.

It will be remembered that the so-called first Progressive Convention held in June of 1882 was not a denominational conference. The expelled members of the German Baptist Church had gathered simply for the purposes of conferring as to what they ought to do as to the future and of setting forth the principles by which they would abide. The convention closed with a still-existing hope that there might be a rectification of the wrongs as they saw them in connection with the Annual Meeting body and a union with it. With that hope still prevailing, a committee was appointed with authority to call another convention when needed. And so the convention adjourned *sine die*.

But with the passing of the weeks and months following the Ashland meeting, it was evident that there could be no reconciliation. The views of the two groups were too divergent. It seemed wise, as in the case of Paul and Barnabas in New Testament times, that the two groups should go their separate ways and thus cease all the agitation which had stirred the Brotherhood for several years.

Hence the progressives met in another conference at the time and place mentioned above for the purpose of organizing

themselves into a new denomination. The conference was held at almost the same time as the conference of the main body. This fact indicates the matured feeling of these brethren by this time. There was no use to wait to see what the main group would do. The door was closed as far as any reconsideration of their case was concerned. Not wishing to further delay matters, the Dayton conference convened. Because of its basic significance in the history of a new denomination, we shall take time to look into its actions in some detail. The writer has before him a copy of the Minutes of this conference, which provide the best possible factual material on its proceedings.

The intense interest in this gathering and its consequent size are sometimes underestimated. A perusal of the musty pages of the *Dayton Daily Journal* under the dates of June 6, 7, and 8, 1883, indicates that this was a meeting of considerable proportions. The Progressive Brethren were quite strong in the Dayton area, hence Dayton was chosen as the best place for the conference. On April 17 prior to the convening of this conference, a committee, called the Reconstruction Committee, had met in Fairview, Ohio, and had arranged a tentative program for the two-day meeting.

In looking toward the convening of the conference, the *Daily Journal*, under the date of June 6, 1883, wrote: "It will be decidedly one of the most important occurrences of the year in Dayton, and will bring several thousand strangers, delegates, and elders to the city." It further related that "Excursions will be run to the city from all parts of the country, and the occasion promises to be a most interesting one." On the next day the same paper stated that on the first day of the conference at least two thousand delegates and representatives of this new branch of the Tunker church were in attendance. Then in its issue of June 8, it remarked that the attendance on the second and final day of the conference was much larger than on the first day.

In the same publication the group was characterized as representing "the advanced thinkers of the church" and comprising "one of the most intelligent bodies that has assembled

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in the city for religious purposes." It goes on to describe them as resembling "the Quakers in their modest and grave demeanor, but the convention is conducted in a businesslike manner, which shows that there is no formality when there is work to be done." The *Journal* also referred to the Progressives as "composed principally of the younger members of the church" who had not become unalterably fixed in their denominational ties.

Thus with an earnestness born of deep convictions and high hopes for better things in future days, the conference met to organize its representative constituency into a new denomination, and to chart a suitable course of action. The meeting opened with Henry Holsinger in charge. He called attention to the importance of the gathering and asked the assembly to kneel in the customary fashion as Elder P. J. Brown led in prayer. After the hymn "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" was sung, J. H. Worst was chosen as temporary chairman with Edward Mason as temporary secretary. They proceeded immediately to the selection of permanent officers for the organization, using the nominating committee method. After only fifteen minutes of deliberation, the committee reported its slate of officers as follows: Moderator, H. R. Holsinger; Assistant Moderator, W. L. Spanogle; Clerk, Edward Mason; and Assistant Clerk, W. A. Adams. These officers were approved "unanimously."

It was altogether fitting that Henry Holsinger should be chosen as the first moderator of the new organization. He had borne the brunt of the battle and was perfectly capable of leading the group in its beginning days. H. A. Brandt, though not a follower of Holsinger, in referring to the latter in his book *Meet Henry Kurtz*, has said: "Henry R. Holsinger is easily one of the most brilliant men in the history of the Brethren."¹ Along with his brilliance, he possessed a keen knowledge of the issues involved, courage, and fidelity to the cause which he had espoused.

¹ Harry A. Brandt. *Meet Henry Kurtz* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1941), p. 15.

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Following his selection, Holsinger gave a brief address of appreciation in which he stressed the principle of congregational church government and expressed the desire that the convention would advance upon that principle. The body then proceeded to enroll the delegates, beginning with the eastern representatives and proceeding to the west. During the process of enrollment it occurred to one of the delegates that the matter of consolidating three groups which were present into one body had not yet been cared for. And so it was decided that since there was practically no difference between these three groups—the Progressive Brethren, the Congregational Brethren, and the Leedy Brethren—they should be considered as one body and that this body should be called Brethren, leaving off all other titles.

There was considerable discussion with respect to what name should be adopted as the official name of the denomination. The title "The Progressive Christian Church" was suggested, but with little support. The title "Progressive Brethren" was offered. Neither did it receive much support. But the name "Brethren" satisfied everybody as being a New Testament name and as being a name by which the Tunkers had been known from the beginning of their existence. So the following resolution was adopted unanimously: "Resolved that the Brethren heretofore known as Progressive, those known as Congregational, and those known as Leedy Brethren are all one body in Christ, and that all sectarian titles that heretofore existed shall be forever dropped, and we will hereafter be known religiously and socially and know each other by the gospel name Brethren."² The name in the Articles of Incorporation filed at the State House in Columbus, Ohio, September 21, 1883, is "The Brethren Church." Hence, this is our name.

For the sake of clarification, it should be stated that the Congregational Brethren were an offshoot of the Far Western Brethren, located in Illinois and vicinity, who took a stricter view than their fellows on the matter of congregational church

² *Proceedings of the Dayton Convention*, pp. 13, 18, and 21. Printed at the Daily Journal Job Rooms, 1883.

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government, who observed the single mode in connection with the feet-washing service, and who refused absolutely to compromise with the Annual Meeting on this viewpoint. The Leedy Brethren were a group in Ohio who took much the same viewpoint as the Congregational Brethren and found themselves in trouble with the Annual Meeting. By way of anticipation, it is interesting to note that not long after, Annual Meeting adopted the viewpoint of both the Congregational and Leedy Brethren with regard to the feet-washing service.

Following the settling of the matters of consolidation and the name, the convention completed the enrollment of the delegates. Among the sizable crowd of delegates who came for the conference, there was a stalwart group of progressive elders who were to exert a directive influence in these beginning days. From a picture that has been left to us of the elders in attendance at the conference, a copy of which is in the Grace Seminary library, we know of twenty-six ministers who were present at this first meeting. Outstanding among them, in addition to the officers already mentioned, were William Keefer, I. H. Swihart, H. T. Hixon, W. J. H. Bauman, S. H. Bashor, P. J. Brown, E. L. Yoder, H. S. Jacobs, J. W. Beer, Samuel Kiehl, and J. B. Wampler. Each one of these men made definite contributions to the progressive movement. Worthy of special mention at this point is Stephen H. Bashor, who eloquently addressed the conference on the subject "Why I Am a Progressive." In this address he stated the cause of the division in the church and set forth the principles of Progressivism.

Some progressive measures were adopted at this conference which were to have far-reaching effects on the future of the denomination. One of these had to do with the elevation of standards for the ministry. A committee which had been appointed to make recommendations on this matter brought in five recommendations as follows:

- 1st. It is the duty of the minister to *study* to show himself approved unto God, etc., according to 2d Tim. 2:15.
- 2d. He must preach the Word, 2d Tim. 4:2.
- 3d. His field of labor is the world, according to the Savior's teaching, Matt. 28:19-20.

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4th. The qualifications of the ministry are set forth by Paul in 1st Tim. 3:1-11.

5th. And we recognize it to be a congregational duty, when possible, to support with sufficient liberality the minister who may serve them in word and doctrine, so he may be able to give himself wholly to the work of the ministry. (See Acts 6:4; also 1st Corinthians, 9th chap., from 1 to 14 inclusive.³

W. J. H. Bauman (1837-1922), father of Louis S., and grandfather of Paul R. Bauman, was chairman of this committee. These recommendations were adopted. This was a very important matter inasmuch as the recommendations remedied a definite weakness which the progressives saw in the main body of the church. Without a strong and well-prepared ministry, a strong church could not be expected to develop. All of this entailed a salaried and trained ministry, which had been frowned upon by the Annual Meeting constituency.

A committee of two qualified elders was appointed whose duty was to care for the reconstruction of broken churches and the organization of new ones. Here was a new type of evangelistic effort established for the purpose of building up the churches. The two men vested with this responsibility were P. J. Brown and I. H. Swihart. Plans were laid toward putting Ashland College on a firmer financial basis. Apparently up to that time only a few had taken any responsibility in the matter of bearing the financial burden of the school which came into the possession of progressives by their assumption of its financial obligations.

On the matter of going to law to maintain interest in church property, the decision was that "we maintain our rights, so far as agreeable with the Gospel, and that the matter of doing so be left to each individual church."⁴ In other words, they would not initiate legal proceedings but felt it was their right to defend themselves in court even as did Paul who, after being apprehended, said: "I appeal unto Caesar."⁵ This has continued to be the viewpoint of most Brethren people until

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁵ Acts 25:11.

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recent years when it has been violated by some of the so-called Ashland Brethren. The Grace Brethren have persistently adhered to it without any exception.

Very forward-looking action was taken in this first conference with respect to promoting the work of the Sunday school. Here was another place in which there was weakness among many of the Annual Meeting churches, although they had begun to stress the Sunday school to some extent. At this first Brethren conference they passed a resolution favoring Sunday schools in general and every means toward successfully promoting their work. They passed another resolution looking toward the preparation of Brethren Sunday-school literature. They recommended the holding of district Sunday-school conventions to further Sunday-school work and otherwise showed a zealous interest in this great arm of the church.

At the conference definite plans were adopted looking toward the establishment of a publishing house. It was urged that this matter be consummated as soon as possible, and the records show that it was not long until a Brethren publishing house was in operation in Ashland, Ohio. A clear statement was made on congregational church government as the Brethren method. It reads as follows: "We believe that every company of believers or brethren united or organized according to the laws of Christ is wholly independent and is perfectly capable of self-government."⁶ Other forward-looking actions were taken, but these will suffice to suggest the general character of the conference. Holsinger refers to it as "one of the most satisfactory conferences in which I ever took part."⁷ A harmony prevailed and a unity of purpose that enabled work to be accomplished. At this conference The Brethren Church became a fixed institution. Plans were made for a charter and an impetus was given to the organization of state and district conferences. The Brethren Church was now launched and began its voyage through the world's troubled sea.

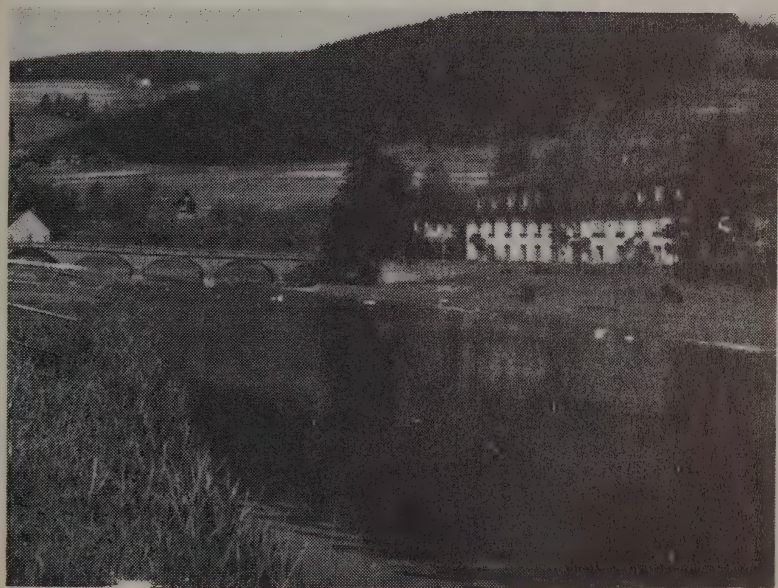
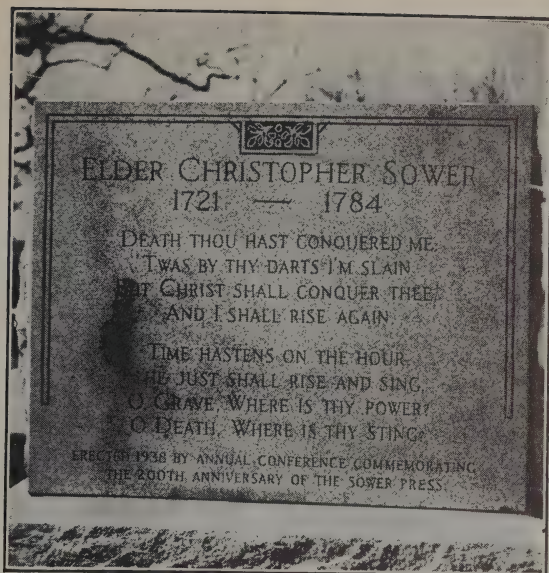
⁶ *Proceedings of the Dayton Convention, op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁷ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 540.

Thus, after two full days of harmonious deliberation, the conference came to a close with the appointment of "a committee of five, distributed through the several states" to act as a national Executive Committee to arrange for a future convention whenever occasion would demand. The delegates left this first Brethren conference with new animation and vision. Their enthusiasm was born of the unity which now prevailed. Much of the friction which had molested them for several years past was at an end.

In summarizing the events that led to the formation of The Brethren Church as a new denomination, it will be helpful to remember that there were five distinct episodes in the drama of establishment. There was, *first*, the Ashland conference of June 1881, at which time the trouble between the conservative and progressive forces in Tunkerism was brought to a focus through the complaints of five districts against Henry Holsinger and the *Progressive Christian*. At this time there was appointed the Berlin Committee which was sent to deal with Holsinger in his own church. *Second*, there was the work of the Berlin Committee in August of the same year, 1881. Because Holsinger insisted upon a stenographer and an open meeting, the Committee considered him insubordinate and sent a decision to the next Annual Meeting that Holsinger "cannot be in fellowship with the Brotherhood, and all who depart with him shall be held responsible to the action of the next Annual Meeting."

Third, there was the Arnold's Grove Conference of May-June 1882, when the Berlin report was considered and Holsinger and his followers were expelled. The expelled group met in a nearby schoolhouse immediately and decided upon a progressive conference to be held about four weeks hence for the purpose of charting their future course. *Fourth*, there was the Ashland Conference late in June 1882, oftentimes called the first Progressive Conference, but not to be confused with the first denominational conference of a year later. At this 1882 conference the progressives declared their principles of belief and action but left the door open for a union with the main

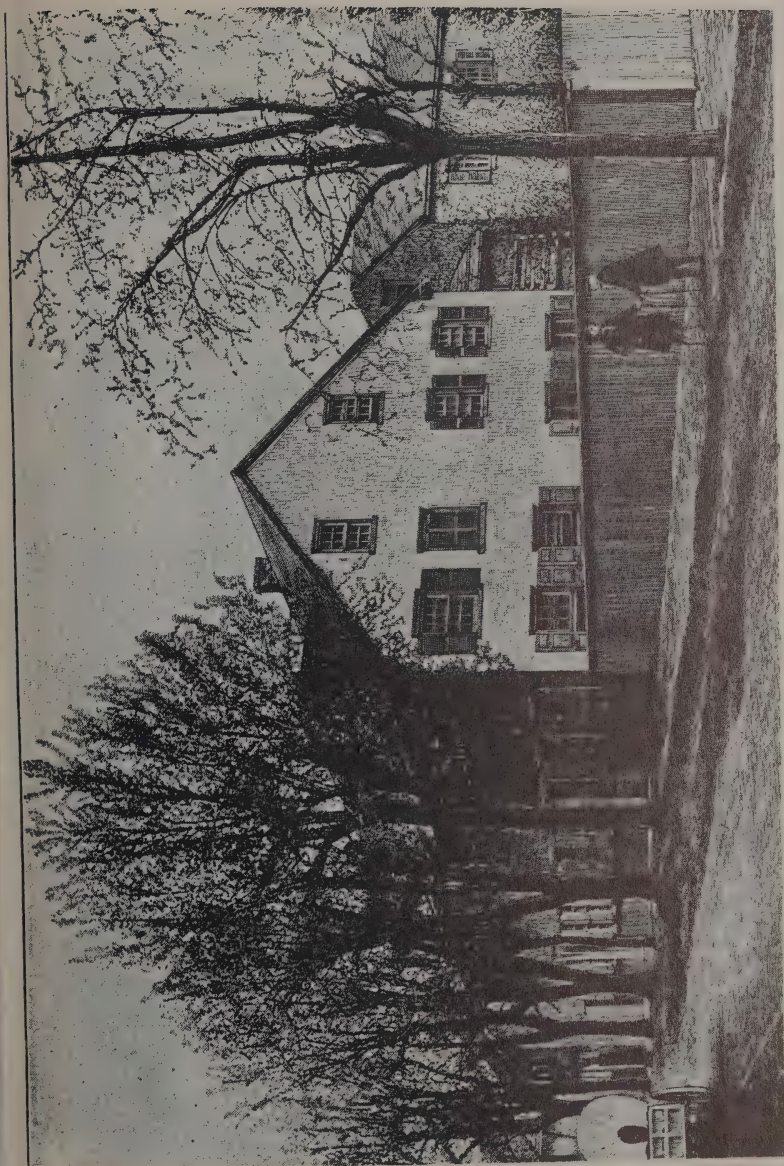


Scene of First Brethren Baptisms

The Elder River, Germany, where the first eight members of The Brethren Church were baptized in 1708.

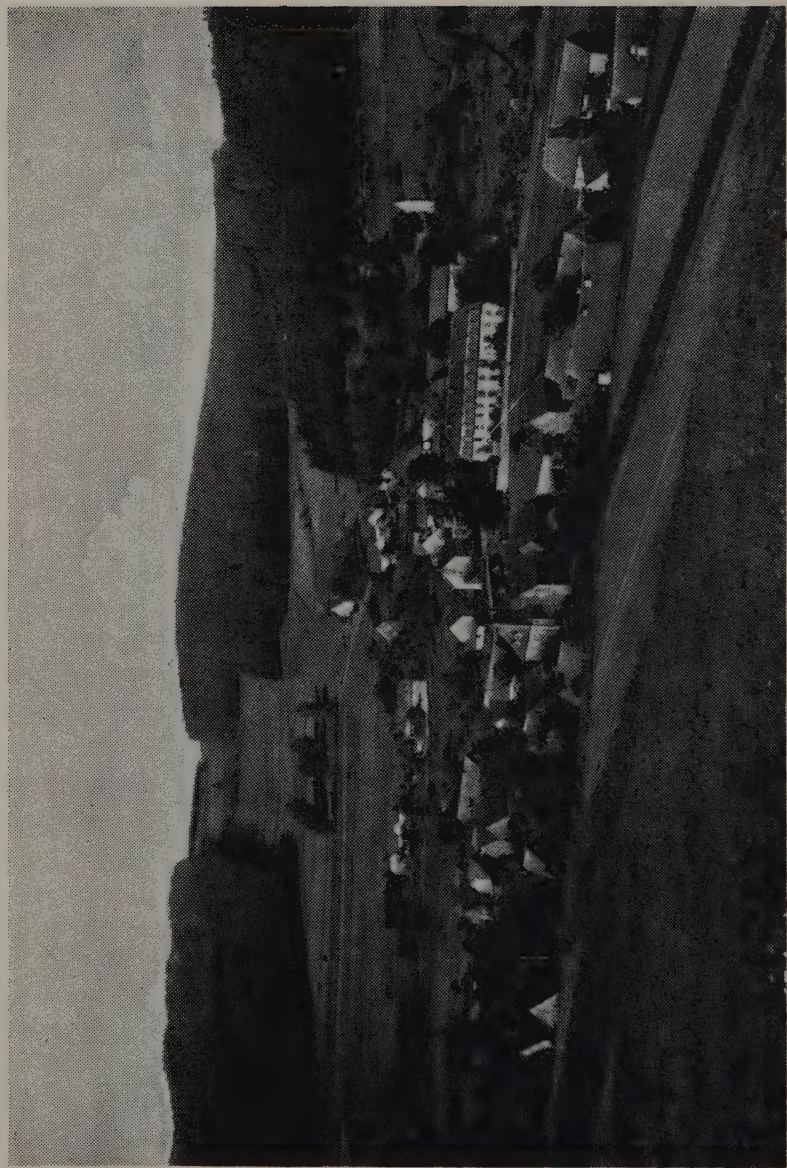


Church near Laasphe, Germany, where the Sowers worshiped



Where Brethren Printing Began in America

Home of Christopher Sower near Philadelphia, erected in 1731. The Brethren meeting-house was upstairs. The printing was done in the building at the rear.



Schwarzenau, Germany
Birthplace of The Brethren Church in 1708



Grace Theological Seminary and
Grace College



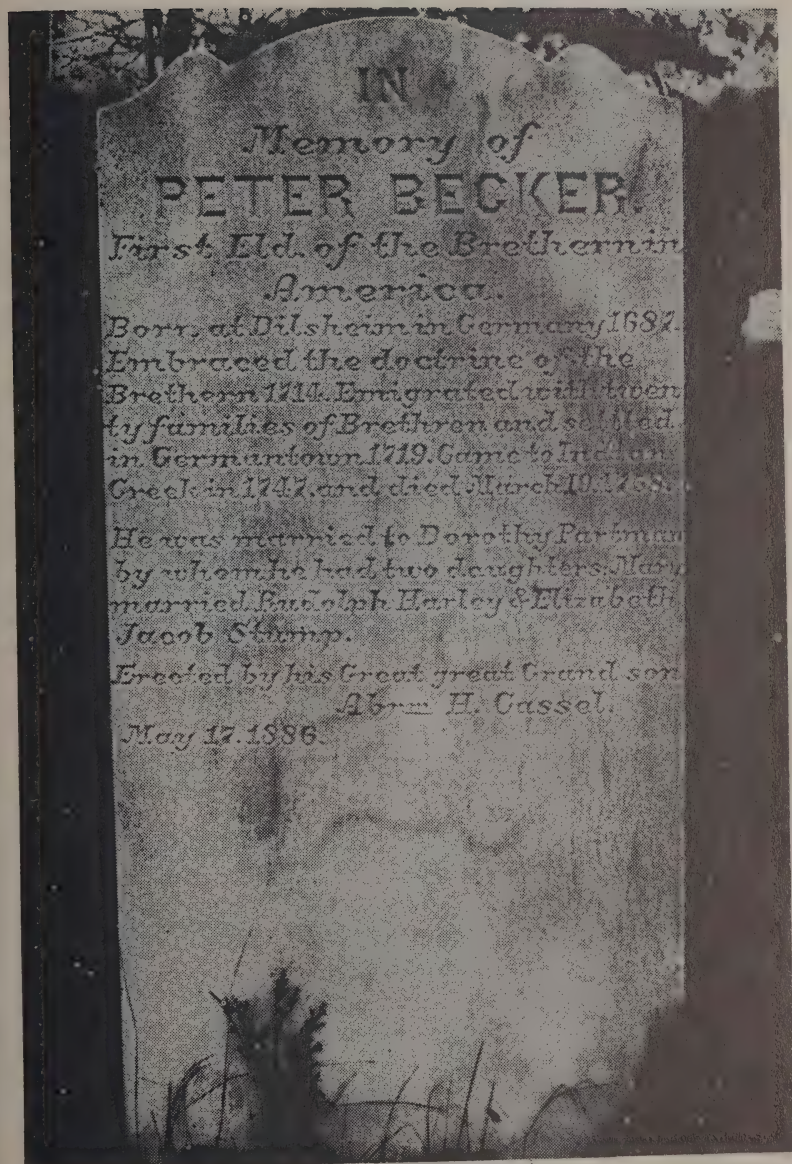
The Brethren Missionary Residence
Winona Lake, Indiana



The Brethren Missionary Herald Building

Winona Lake, Indiana

The denominational office building which houses the offices of the Foreign Missionary Society, The Brethren Home Missions Council, The National Sunday School Board, The National Youth Board, and The Brethren Missionary Herald Company



Gravestone of Peter Becker
First pastor of the first Brethren church in America



Old Germantown Church
Organized December 25, 1723, the first Brethren church in America

373.
DAs habt zum Zeichen, ihr werdet finden das
Kindlein in Windlen gewickelt, und in ei-
ner Krippen liegen. Luc. 2 : 12.

Das Kindlein **I**esus spricht: Werde mit
Klein und still.

Hier liegt das Kindlein in der Krippen,
Es schweigt sein Geist und seine Lippen,
Sein ganzes Wesen sagen will:
Kind, wärst du auch so Klein und still.

First Sunday School Literature

Robert Raikes started his first Sunday school in 1770. The Brethren had a Sunday school in Germantown in 1738. The Bible was the text-book, but cards like this one were furnished by the Sower Press.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH

body. *Finally*, there was the Dayton Conference of 1883, at which time The Brethren Church was definitely organized and became an established denomination.

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10

• *The First Quarter-Century*
• *Following Organization*
• *(1883-1907)*

Following the establishment of The Brethren Church as a separate denomination in 1883, it began at once to launch out into a constructive program of advancement. New animation was manifested in all the organized congregations, and new churches were organized in all parts of the Brotherhood. Congregations, newly organized, began to appear in such widely separated locations as Summit Mills (1883), McKee (1886), Philadelphia (1887), Pittsburgh (1890), Altoona (1894), and Uniontown (1900) in Pennsylvania; Pleasant Hill (1883) and Ankenytown (1883) in Ohio; Oakville (1886), Loree (1886), Mexico (1889), Elkhart (1889), Berne (1889), Warsaw (1892), and North Liberty (1896) in Indiana; Lanark (1884), Milledgeville (1884) in Illinois; Lake Odessa, Michigan (1887); Udell, Iowa (1891); Mulvane (1884) and McLouth (1892), Kansas; Beaver City (1884) and Falls City (1885), Nebraska; Sunnyside, Washington (1900); and Turlock (1891) and LaVerne (1892), California.

The publishing house at Ashland, Ohio, partook of the prevailing enthusiasm and began to send out more and more tracts and Sunday-school literature. The name of the *Progressive Christian* was changed to that of *The Brethren Evangelist* in order to be more in harmony with the adopted name of the denomination and to set forth its main purpose—that of evangelism. A strong effort was put forth to put Ashland College on a solid financial basis. This, however, proved to be a difficult undertaking for the young denomination. The matter of educational institutions was still in its infancy in the Brother-

hood. Then, too, it was discovered that the indebtedness on the institution was far more than they had supposed it was. And, in view of the turn of events in the division of the church, some who had agreed to make donations defaulted in payment of them, leaving those in charge of the institution in an embarrassing situation. Thus serious struggles ensued. Adding to these difficulties was the fact that the greater part of the membership of the new organization was from the poorer classes.

The new denomination faced other difficulties. Most of the church buildings and property were in the hands of the main body from which they had separated. But a progressive spirit energized these Brethren. What they lacked in wealth and numbers they made up in consecrated zeal; consequently, new buildings were erected and new congregations were organized.

Holsinger calls attention to another factor which no doubt tended to slow down the progress of the progressive movement. That was the change of attitude on the part of the Annual Meeting body. They at once ceased the wholesale expulsion of progressive members. Some had felt that the action taken against Holsinger and his sympathizers at Arnold's Grove was too swift. They left many friends within the church who were slow to take further drastic actions against them. This feeling tended to slow down expulsive measures thereafter with the result that many who had progressive tendencies remained within the main body, feeling that conditions were rectifying. Holsinger expressed his view that had the conservatives continued their drastic actions of the 1882 conference there would have been several hundred more Brethren churches in the United States. That, of course, is a matter of conjecture, but the new method of operation on the part of the main body doubtless had its effect.

This produced a healthy reaction on the part of the Progressives, for they went out into new fields to evangelize. Stephen H. Bashor (b. 1852) was one of those who was particularly used in the field of evangelism. Holsinger refers to him as "the most successful Tunker revivalist in the history of

the denomination.”¹ He had had a prominent part in the great division of the Tunker fraternity through his preaching and writing. After the organization of The Brethren Church, in which he also had a prominent part, he continued his evangelistic ministry. He traveled throughout the Brotherhood from coast to coast, preaching in nearly every congregation. It has been estimated that ten thousand persons were brought into the church through his ministry. It seems, however, that during the latter years of his life he became desirous of worldly fame and gave himself to a fruitless ministry in lecturing and in politics, even going so far as to run for Congress futilely in three parties.

Shortly following the birth of the new denomination, state and district conferences were organized in rapid succession in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana; then Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia were formed into the Southeast district. Illinois, Iowa, and the Dakotas formed a district, which was called Illiokota. Then came Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado, which was named Kanemorado from a careful manipulation of the names of the several states involved. Thus the foundation was laid for a more complete development in succeeding years.

During the period of time now under consideration there was no question as to the great historic and fundamental truths of Christianity as held by all the evangelical denominations. The Brethren adhered strictly to their adopted slogan, “The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.” This included, of course, the several doctrinal practices that have made the Brethren a distinct group among the denominations, such as trine immersion, feet-washing, the love-feast, the saluting by the holy kiss, and anointing the sick with oil.

Because of their foundational character, we shall consider briefly some of the factors relating to the first ten of the Brethren general conferences. We have already considered the first of these, the organizational conference held at Dayton,

¹ Henry R. Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901), p. 642.

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Ohio, in 1883. It will be remembered that that conference closed on a motion that the convention adjourn to meet at the call of the national executive committee. In compliance with this action the second general conference of The Brethren Church was held at Ashland, Ohio, in September of 1887. It will be noted that the traditional idea of a conference every year was set aside with the allowance of a lapse of four years. This harmonized with their conviction that the Annual Meeting had been usurping too much authority in the church. Again H. R. Holsinger was elected moderator, the rule of present days not being in effect, that a moderator cannot succeed himself in office.

The matter of church polity was an important consideration at this conference and it was declared that the true nature of congregational church government "relates alone to the incidental affairs of the congregation, and not to doctrinal practices, which must be universal."² In other words, each congregation is privileged to run its own affairs apart from any jurisdiction from without (including general conference), but it dare not depart from the accepted beliefs of the church and still call itself Brethren. A church cannot choose, for instance, to deny the deity of Christ or His substitutionary atonement and still call itself Brethren. A church cannot choose to practice single immersion and still call itself Brethren. There must be unanimity of belief in The Brethren Church, but the component churches may conduct their incidental affairs as they see fit. For instance, each church may decide how many times a year it will observe communion or what style of architecture it will use in its new church building, and so on *ad infinitum*.

This second conference was also notable in respect to the women of the denomination, for it was at this time that the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor was organized. The name of this society was later changed to the Women's Missionary Society, and in the Grace group of churches it is called the Women's Missionary Council. The object of this women's group was stated to be the defraying of the expenses of an

² *Ibid.*, p. 545.

evangelist. Sometime later its ministry was made much more inclusive.

Mary M. Sterling (b. 1859), a very remarkable woman, was chosen as the first president of the movement. In addition to being a splendid leader of the women of the church, she was ordained to the ministry by her home church at Masontown, Pennsylvania. She also served as state evangelist by appointment of the Pennsylvania Conference during the conference year of 1895 with general commendation. It is recorded that she preached 1,157 sermons and led a goodly number of persons into The Brethren Church. Later other women were elected to the eldership in The Brethren Church. But little by little the church has come to limit the eldership to the male sex. This change has come about quietly through no conference action but by a more careful study of the Word.

It was at this 1887 conference that decision was made to hold the national conferences once every five years unless a majority of the state conferences should request an intermediate conference. This action was again in harmony with the church's feeling that it is not controlled by conference, but by the individual congregations. Conferences, therefore, should only be held as often as necessary for council and advice. It will be observed, however, that as the denomination grew it could not get along very well with such infrequent conferences. It was not long until they began annual gatherings, which have proved to be essential for the furtherance of the various denominational projects and for the acquaintance and fellowship which they foster.

The third general conference was held at Warsaw, Indiana, in 1892, this being the only time they adhered to the five-year rule. Some far-reaching actions were taken at this conference. The *Brethren Evangelist* and publishing house was purchased from the Brethren Publishing Company, then located at Waterloo, Iowa, and moved to Ashland, Ohio. S. J. Harrison was chosen as editor of the paper. A forward step was taken in the production of suitable Sunday-school literature in that a committee composed of A. D. Gnagey, D. C. Moomaw, and

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J. H. Knepper was appointed to take steps in this direction. This was an important educational advance.

Another exceedingly important consideration at this conference was its setting forth of a statement on doctrine. The church continued to be fearful of manmade creeds, but again and again the membership was confronted with questions as to what were their beliefs and what was their justification for a separate denomination. In order that they might be ready with an answer to such queries, they created a statement relative to their faith.

First of all, the conference reaffirmed the former position of the church in renouncing all creeds of every description except the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

However, for the satisfaction of honest inquirers they announced officially that The Brethren Church understands her creed to teach, *among other things*, the following:

1. That the ordinance of baptism is trine immersion only.
2. That feet-washing is a divine institution, and should be practiced in the public worship by all saints, in connection with the Lord's Supper.
3. That the Lord's Supper is a full evening meal and is to be eaten at night, as a divine institution, in the public worship of God, in connection with the communion of bread and wine.
4. That the eating of the communion bread and the drinking of the communion wine, in connection with the Lord's Supper, is a divine ordinance, to be thus kept and obeyed by the church in her public worship.
5. That the "holy kiss" is a divine institution, to be practiced by all the saints in the public worship of God.
6. That the various separate and collective congregations, while absolutely and truly congregational in government, yet each and all have a divine relation to each other, and to the whole church as the body of Christ, and that, therefore, the faith, character, and practice of each and all are under the same divine law of government, under Christ and the Holy Spirit, to each other, as the Word of God teaches.

7. That hereafter our general convention shall be called the Brethren General Conference.^a

It should be understood that these doctrinal matters presented above have to do mainly with the distinctive doctrines held by the Brethren which made of them a separate denomination. On the fundamental doctrines of the faith, such as the person and work of Christ, justification by faith, and sanctification of life, they were in general agreement with all other evangelical bodies. There was no problem as far as these were concerned.

The fourth general conference was held the next year, 1893, and again at Warsaw. J. M. Tombaugh (1857-1933), who had served as moderator of the previous conference, was reelected. Considerable time at this conference was devoted to the consideration of work among the children and young people of the denomination.

The next two conferences in 1894 and 1895 were held at Ashland, Ohio. At the 1894 conference the Sisters' Society reported splendid growth, thirty societies now being organized. Encouraged by this growth, they decided to send Sister Laura Grossnickle (b. 1858) into the field as an organizer, a type of general secretary. She was very successful in her travels among the churches, and as a result many new women's societies were organized. In Sister Grossnickle we have another example of a woman who was ordained in The Brethren Church and who acted as a pastor for several years prior to taking up the organizational work for the Sisters' Society. There were already severe repercussions to this sort of thing in her day. Sister Grossnickle became the wife of Brother George W. Hendricks in 1898. It was notable that the Sisters' Society at this conference donated \$150 toward the support of the chair of theology at Ashland College. From then on the women continued to show a very practical interest in Ashland College.

It was at the 1895 conference that the matter of a missions program in the church began to take definite shape. The General Mission Board was more fully organized and Dr. J. E. Roop, J. D. McFadden, and David Augustine were elected

^a *Ibid.*, p. 546f.

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trustees of the board and reported \$69.25 in the treasury. Since November 11, 1892, the "general" board was incorporated under the official name, "Missionary Board of The Brethren Church." However, because its charter definitely states that the object of the board is to care for both "foreign and domestic" missions, it continued oftentimes to be referred to as the General Mission Board. A copy of the charter of the Missionary Board may be found in *The Brethren Evangelist* under date of March 16, 1940. The committee on statistics in 1895 reported 138 congregations in the denomination with 206 places where regular services were being held. The number of members reported at this time was 10,031, which shows a moderate advance from the estimated 5,000 at the time of the organization of the church in 1883.

The seventh conference was held in 1896 at Eagle Lake, Indiana, which is the present Winona Lake. This was the first of a long list of conferences held at this central location. There appears to have been an unusual amount of missionary enthusiasm present at this conference with the result that a mission work was established in Chicago and nearly three thousand dollars was subscribed toward its support. The Sisters' Society showed marked progress, as well as the work among the children. There was now a King's Children's Society in operation which was doing a commendable work.

The eighth annual conference went to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1897 where problems relating to the sagging financial situation at Ashland College, temperance, and missions were outstanding in consideration. At this conference for the first time the minutes of national conference contain a caption of a paragraph reading "Foreign Missions," under which there was the following resolution: "The hour is come for foreign missions by The Brethren Church. We endorse Brother J. C. Mackey and commend him to the work in India, with our prayers and support." This endorsement evidently was as far as Brother Mackey ever got on his way to India. But the spirit of missions was at work in the Brotherhood, and articles were being written on the subject in Brethren publications. Such

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interest was bidding fair to result in something tangible in the not too distant future.

The ninth conference was held at Winona Park, Indiana, which was still another name for the present Winona Lake, in 1899. The record indicates that there was considerable activity in the realm of the printed page at this time. *Brethren Evangelist* subscriptions were on the increase. Sunday-school quarterlies were appearing in greater numbers. Book sales were expanding. Tracts and the like appearing in greater numbers indicate that the Brethren were realizing the possibilities of the printed ministry. Again the minutes show a continued interest in the subject of missions. One of the resolutions passed was a recommendation for "the holding of Bible and missionary conventions throughout the Brotherhood." The church was beginning to get the far view!

The tenth general conference held at Winona Lake in 1900 will live long in importance because of a movement that was born at this time, not in the conference itself, but through some earnest souls who were in attendance. I refer to the Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church. At this conference Brother Jacob C. Cassel (1849-1919), a prominent elder of the church at that time, who was to become the first treasurer of the Foreign Missionary Society after its organization, presented a paper on the subject, "Are We Ready To Enter the Foreign Missionary Field?" The paper stirred up much comment. Some received its implication with hearty approval. To them it seemed to promise a better day for the spread of the Gospel. There were others who questioned the advisability of putting into effect the proposals of the paper. The idea might be all right, but they were not sure that the time was ripe for such a venture. Still others voiced their outright disapproval of any foreign missionary program. To them the plea of Brother Cassel was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. But the paper proved to be as good seed sown into soil, part of which was already prepared to receive it, while part was totally unprepared.

The moderator of the conference, Elder J. H. Knepper, of

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Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, was sympathetic with the missionary enthusiasts. They were thus given an opportunity to present their cause. However, when the issue was presented of actually effecting a foreign missionary organization within the conference itself, no encouragement was given. The missionary enthusiasts were informed that there was plenty of room "out under the trees" where they could go to effect their organization. And this was exactly what they did. Having been given the cold shoulder by conference, the group betook themselves to a little knoll to the north of the building where the conference was being held. The site is midway between the old Auditorium, where most of our annual conferences are still held, and the Billy Sunday Tabernacle, which has been erected since the conference of 1900. On this spot these missionary enthusiasts who refused to have their ardor cooled conceived and brought to birth The Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church. They could no longer fail to heed the marching orders of the church.

The date was September 4, 1900, at 2 p.m. Dr. Louis S. Bauman (1875-1950), who was one of those present upon this memorable occasion, in his unpublished account of these early years of our foreign missionary work (upon which he was working at the time of his death), has described the place and the event in these graphic words:

If you go to Winona Lake, walk from about the center of the north side of the Auditorium directly toward the Billy Sunday Tabernacle you come to a tree standing on the highest point, you will be beneath the kindly tree that stretched its covering boughs out over the birthplace of the newborn babe. God bless that tree! Long may it stand! If, by any chance, one can hold communion with a tree, then that tree has heard one voice speak to it almost every year since then, thanking it for spreading its sheltering arms over the tiny babe that was begotten that day.⁴

It will be of interest to our readers to note that a prayer chapel is being built on this location under the direction of the Winona Lake Christian Assembly, Inc., and in it there will be

⁴Louis S. Bauman, unpublished manuscript on the history of Brethren missions, 1950, p. 9f.

a bronze tablet indicating the event which we have been describing.

The minutes of the first meeting of the newly-organized Foreign Missionary Society show that fifty-three members of The Brethren Church enrolled as charter members. An executive committee was chosen composed of six members (soon increased to nine), which is now known as the board of trustees of the Foreign Missionary Society. At the present time there are ten members on the board, the tenth member being the General Secretary, who is not an elected member as the others are.

The first recorded statement on the yellowed pages of the record of the Society is as follows: "At the General Conference of The Brethren Church, which convened at Winona Lake, Indiana, August 31 to September 5, 1900, the matter of opening a way for foreign missionary effort was discussed earnestly, and many seemed moved by the Spirit to take some action that would lead to some definite step in that direction. Accordingly a meeting to effect a Foreign Missionary Society was convened on Tuesday at 2 o'clock p.m., Sept. 4, 1900."⁶

This society thus had its beginning separate from conference and it has continued to be separate up to the present hour, although it works in close harmony with conference. From this humble beginning, the work of foreign missions has grown through the years until at the present time we have 96 missionaries serving in six different fields. It took several years after the formation of the Foreign Missionary Society before actual work in foreign lands began on a permanent basis. After trial efforts which failed in Persia and Canada, a permanent work was established in Argentina in 1909 under the leadership of Charles F. Yoder, this field having been selected by the board in 1907. With this as a beginning, other fields have been opened in succeeding years. We shall refer to this advancement in later pages.

The work of home missions, of course, continued to be car-

⁶ *Minutes of the Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church, 1900 to 1923, p. 1.*

ried on under the direction of the general mission board, which came to be known as The Missionary Board of the Brethren Church after the origin of the Foreign Missionary Society. The work of this board achieved only moderate success due to lack of dynamic leadership and effective methods for carrying on such work. One of the special projects of the home board was the establishing of work in the mountains of Kentucky following 1905, under the leadership of Elder George Drushal. The work centered at Lost Creek and consisted mainly in the establishment of a mission school with evangelism of the surrounding area. This work continues to the present time. Further comment on this mission effort appears in a later chapter.

Not only had Holsinger much to do with the division that brought about the organization of The Brethren Church, but he also had much to do with piloting its course through its difficult, formative years. Through preaching, counseling, and writing, he was easily one of the great Brethren of his day. As we have seen, he was chosen moderator of the first two conferences following the church's organization. During his latter years, which were fraught with failing health, he labored hard on his *History of the Tunkers and The Brethren Church*. He was afflicted in such a manner that at times he could not talk, but made himself understood by pointing to various printed words. A large portion of his book was dictated while reclining upon a couch. At least ninety percent of it was dictated to a secretary because the author could not write legibly on account of his illness. It was a nervous affliction that bothered him, but he persisted to the end so that his comprehensive work was finally completed in July 1901.

In the years shortly before his death he spent some time in California and Arizona, finally coming to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to the home of his daughter Annie, where he was loosed away upward on Sunday evening, March 12, 1905. He was not quite seventy-two years old, having been born in Morrison's Cove, Pennsylvania, May 26, 1833. His funeral service was conducted by Rev. William S. Bell, then pastor of the First

Brethren Church in Johnstown, and his body was laid to rest in the beautiful cemetery in Berlin, Pennsylvania. The Ministerial Association of The Brethren Church has erected over the graves of Henry Holsinger and his wife Susannah a very fitting monument which stands as a testimony to the unfaltering faith and untiring zeal of these servants of God. Freeman Ankrum, in his book, *Alexander Mack the Tunker and Descendants* has included a good picture of the Holsinger monument and calls attention to the fact that Henry Holsinger "came back in death where perhaps one of his greatest struggles and trials in life had taken place."⁶

Thus the founder of The Brethren Church not only lived long enough to see his church well established as a denomination but also four years beyond the time when he finished his history of the Tunker movement. Hence it is true regarding Henry Ritz Holsinger that "he being dead, yet speaketh."⁷

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⁶ Freeman Ankrum, *Alexander Mack the Tunker and Descendants* (Scottdale, Pa.: The Herald Press, 1943), p. 200.

⁷ Heb. 11:4.

*Shadows of an
Impending Crisis
(1908-1930)*

11

The years immediately following the death of Henry Hol-singer witnessed a moderate growth in the new denomination. New churches were established, the missionary program took more definite shape, Ashland College became more firmly established, and other denominational interests fortified their positions. For the most part the church was firmly fixed in its doctrinal viewpoint, adhering strictly to evangelical orthodoxy and to the distinctive ordinances that have characterized the Brethren from the beginning of their existence.

In 1908 Dr. Charles F. Yoder's work entitled *God's Means of Grace* appeared. This work of 631 pages deals with the distinctive doctrines of The Brethren Church. Prior to this in 1876 Elder R. H. Miller produced a commendable work of similar purpose entitled *The Doctrine of the Brethren Defended*. Then, during the period now before us, Dr. Louis S. Bauman produced his booklet *The Faith Once for all Delivered unto the Saints* which by 1947 had passed through seven editions. A perusal of these works, as well as of the two works by Dr. Herman A. Hoyt, *This Do in Remembrance of Me* and *All Things Whatsoever I Have Commanded You*, appearing in 1947 and 1948 respectively, will adequately acquaint the reader with the doctrinal position of the church.

There was a tendency on the part of some during the early years of the present century to embrace a legalistic view of salvation and on the part of others to follow their leaders irrespective of their teachings. But the main body of the church was strictly orthodox.

There was in those days, however, a definite lack in ministerial training, with the result that the preaching of the Word of God was deficient in depth and breadth. Expository preaching for the most part was lacking. There was an absence of emphasis upon the doctrine of the pure grace of God with all of its implications. With these apparent weaknesses it is not surprising to discover that there arose a "liberal" movement in The Brethren Church.

We must turn our attention now to Ashland College as we trace this unfortunate movement. Ashland College had been founded at Ashland, Ohio, in 1878, and opened its doors for instruction with Professor S. Z. Sharp as the first president on Wednesday, September 17, 1879. At the beginning the members of the board of trustees were apparently about evenly divided between the "progressives" and "conservatives" but ere long the progressives prevailed and the college became exclusively an institution of The Brethren Church, which was organized in 1883. In 1888 a new charter was adopted which definitely provided that "the training of Christian ministers" shall always be sacredly "regarded as one of Ashland College's major functions," and also that "in order to accomplish the objects of this institution, such instruction shall be given as is usually embraced in the course of colleges or universities and theological seminaries in this and other countries."¹

From this action it would seem that there was an earnest endeavor put forth in those early days to provide a proper theological education for the future leaders of the church. However, the action was slow in being realized. Not until 1906 was the Bible department designated as a "seminary," under the leadership of the late Dr. J. Allen Miller (d. 1935) as its dean. Then, too, this Biblical training in the college was not on the graduate level. It was taken in connection with the regular four-year-college curriculum and was referred to as the classical divinity course which provided the degree of bachelor of arts in divinity.

¹ Clara Worst Miller and E. Glenn Mason, *A Short History of Ashland College to 1953* (Ashland, Ohio: The Brethren Publishing Co., 1953), p. 34.

This was the situation that prevailed until 1930 when, in connection with Ashland College, there was established under the direction of Professor Alva J. McClain (b. 1888) a graduate school of theology, including three years of intensive theological training beyond the four years of college work and leading to the bachelor of divinity degree. This graduate school really was the forerunner of Grace Theological Seminary, which came into existence in 1937. However the school organized in 1930 was called Ashland Theological Seminary and still bears that name as a separate institution.

In view of the fact that the leaders of the Progressive movement, which resulted in the organization of The Brethren Church in 1883, had laid great stress upon an educated ministry, and since Ashland College was so slow in providing educational facilities, it is not surprising that quite a number of earnest young men went to universities and theological schools outside their own church and came in contact with the liberal views which were being taught. Such a man was Dr. J. L. Gillin (b. 1871) who took advanced work at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary. He became the leader of a liberal movement in The Brethren Church by reason of his advanced education and ability. He acted in the capacity of president of Ashland College from 1907 to 1911, and was an ordained minister in The Brethren Church.

It is a small wonder, then, that he was able to exert a strong influence upon the younger ministers of the church who did not possess his attainments. In the years between 1914 and 1921 he was a powerful figure at national conference. The nature of this influence may be witnessed in the fact that at one of the conferences during this period "Dr. Gillin seriously proposed that 'religious experience' be substituted for an 'infallible Bible' as the true basis of Christian authority."²

At the conference of 1915 Dr. Gillin minimized the importance of the deity of Christ by saying, "A person may be a member of the Brethren. . . . and be an Athanasian on the

² Alva J. McClain, "The Background and Origin of Grace Theological Seminary," 1951 *Charis* (Grace Seminary year book), p. 11.

subject of the nature of Christ, or on the other hand he may be an Arian and still be a good member of the church. These things are of minor importance.”^a Students of church history will at once recognize the seriousness of such a statement in that, whereas Athanasius stood uncompromisingly for the full deity of Christ, Arius brought Christ down from His rightful place and made Him a created being or sort of demigod, half-way between God and man.

Soon the issue was sharply drawn. Led mainly by Dr. Louis S. Bauman and Rev. Alva J. McClain, opposition to the liberal ideals of Gillin and his group began to take form. It was now seen that there was a definite need for a clearer and fuller statement of faith than the Brethren had so far produced. The motto, “The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible” was good so far as it went, but it was not sufficiently explanatory; hence a committee was appointed by the National Ministerial Association to draft a statement of faith. This was in no sense to be considered as a church creed, simply a statement of some of the outstanding beliefs of the church. The result was that at the General Conference of 1921, the document known as “The Message of the Brethren Ministry,” prepared in its original form by Rev. Alva J. McClain, was adopted by the National Ministerial Association. It was later endorsed by the General Conference. This document was of tremendous importance and became the rallying point for the evangelical forces of the church. It continues to be used effectively and to appear again and again in our denominational literature. Because of its importance in Brethren history, it is included at this point in this work.

THE MESSAGE OF THE BRETHREN MINISTRY

The Message which Brethren Ministers accept as a divine entrustment to be heralded to a lost world, finds its sole source and authority in the Bible. This message is one of hope for a lost world and speaks with finality and authority. Fidelity to the apostolic injunction to preach the Word demands our utmost endeavor of mind and heart. We, the members of the National Ministerial Association of The Brethren Church, hold that the essential and constituent elements of our message shall continue to be the following declarations:

^a *Ibid.*, p. 12 (quoted from minutes of General Conference of The Brethren Church, 1915, p. 33).

1. Our motto:

The Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible.

2. The authority and integrity of the Holy Scriptures.

The ministry of The Brethren Church desires to bear testimony to the belief that God's supreme revelation has been made through Jesus Christ, a complete and authentic record of which revelation is the New Testament; and, to the belief that the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, are the infallible record of the perfect, final and authoritative revelation of God's will, altogether sufficient in themselves as a rule of faith and practice.

3. We understand the basic content of our doctrinal preaching to be:

- (1) The Pre-Existence, Deity and Incarnation by Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;
- (2) The Fall of Man, his consequent spiritual death and utter sinfulness, and the necessity of his New Birth;
- (3) The Vicarious Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ through the shedding of His own blood;
- (4) The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the body in which He suffered and died, and His subsequent glorification at the right hand of God;
- (5) Justification by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of which obedience to the will of God, and works of righteousness, are the evidence and result; the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, and the life everlasting of the just;
- (6) The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, Who indwells the Christian and is his Comforter and Guide;
- (7) The personal and visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords, the glorious goal for which we are taught to watch, wait and pray;
- (8) The Christian should "be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind"; should not engage in carnal strife, and should "swear not at all";
- (9) The Christian should observe, as his duty and privilege, the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, among which are: (a) Baptism of Believers by Trine Immersion; (b) Confirmation; (c) the Lord's Supper; (d) the Communion of the Bread and Wine; (e) the Washing of the Saints' Feet; and (f) the Anointing of the Sick with Oil.

Some have felt that there ought to be an expansion of this Message. It has been contended that some things could be added and that some of the items already included could be clarified or explained. As a result of this feeling a committee was appointed by the national conference about 1950, with Dr. R. D. Barnard as chairman, to work on an expansion of the Message of the Brethren Ministry. The committee prepared such a document, but it was not accepted by the National Min-

isterium or the National Fellowship, and the committee was dissolved in 1957. The only official Message for our constituency, therefore, is the one appearing on page 129.

Following the adoption of this statement of faith, the liberal forces in the church began to melt away. Dr. Gillin's voice was no longer heard at General Conference. A number of his followers left the church, ministers included, and joined other denominations. His influence at Ashland College diminished and the churches of the Brotherhood were given a larger voice—temporarily at least—in the operation of the school. An effort was put forth to bring to the faculty more men with an unswerving loyalty to the truths set forth in "The Message of the Brethren Ministry." A start in this direction was witnessed in 1925 when the board called Rev. Alva J. McClain to a teaching position at the college. Thus it appeared that the leak in the dam had been repaired—for a time at least.

It was during this period in the history of our church that our foreign missionary work moved forward through the establishment of a work in French Equatorial Africa. This field was approved by General Conference in 1917 after careful investigation had been made by James S. Gribble who was convinced that The Brethren Church ought to open a mission field in a territory not formerly occupied. At the same time, James Gribble, his wife Florence (who was a medical doctor), Miss Estella Myers, and Miss Mae Snyder were approved as missionaries to this field. They sailed for Africa early in 1918, being joined later the same year by the Antoine Rollier family at Brazzaville, where the party was forced to undergo a period of waiting until September of 1921 when the French government gave permission for them to commence work on the Bassai station in Oubangui-Chari, French Equatorial Africa.

Many who read these words will remember the thrill of joy that attended the announcement that our missionaries were actually able to proceed to the field of their labors. The effect was most stimulating. It broadened the missionary horizon of the church and gave stability to the Foreign Missionary Society. It provided encouragement in times of controversy. It was the

harbinger of a better day in a neglected phase of the denomination's life.

But to revert to the situation at Ashland College. Much needed to be done to make that institution what it needed to be to provide a properly trained spiritual leadership in the church. There was no graduate school for definite theological training. What training there was of this nature was included in the four-year collegiate curriculum. The writer, who attended Ashland College from 1922 to 1925, after having graduated from Xenia Theological Seminary, of St. Louis, Missouri, witnessed this lack as he pursued with real profit his collegiate work. Rev. A. J. McClain remained in the existing situation only two years—until 1927—when he resigned, feeling greatly restricted by the administration in his desire to see a fully organized graduate school of theology established on the campus. The latter was not in prospect at that time, although some of the best ministerial students were already beginning to look elsewhere for the furtherance of their theological training.

Upon leaving the Ashland campus to take up a teaching ministry at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Rev. McClain did not give up the idea of the establishment of an adequate theological seminary for the benefit of The Brethren Church. Being a graduate of a theological seminary of high standing and having taught in the Philadelphia School of the Bible in connection with his Philadelphia pastorate, and now in the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Rev. McClain saw the merits of both Bible institute and theological seminary types of education. He conceived the idea of integrating the virtues of the two types into one school. In other words, he envisioned the possibility of bringing together into one institution the high academic standards of a conservative seminary and "the warm spiritual and practical atmosphere of a Bible institute."⁴

Others shared the same opinion, notably Dr. Louis S. Bauman, who offered the facilities of the First Brethren Church in Long Beach, California, for the establishment of such a school.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The First Brethren Church was at this time erecting a large educational building which could have adequately housed the proposed institution had it been deemed advisable. It soon was rumored that consideration was being given to the establishment of a seminary on the Pacific coast. Many expressed keen interest. Money was promised and a prospective student body began to write for information. It appeared that the day was dawning for a full-fledged theological seminary in the Brethren denomination.

The administration of Ashland College quickly became concerned over the possibility of such a school on the west coast. Fear was expressed lest it would tend to draw students away from Ashland College. Dr. Edwin E. Jacobs, president of the college, in July of 1929, wrote to Dr. Bauman that he felt that it would be to the best interests of all concerned to have the seminary located on the campus of Ashland College. And, at the same time, he seemed kindly disposed to the idea of having Dr. McClain assume the leadership of the school.

Subsequent to this, in 1930, Dr. William S. Bell, who was the endowment secretary of Ashland College, and a prominent member of the board of trustees, visited Long Beach to urge an organic union of the proposed seminary with the college. At this time he felt that such a union was imperative to the success of the college. A short time later he wrote Professor McClain, urging that he and Dr. Bauman be present at the next meeting of the board of trustees when the matter would be considered. Dr. Bauman was at this time a member of the college board and Prof. McClain was moderator of the General Conference of The Brethren Church. They both attended, realizing the importance of the meeting.

The meeting just referred to convened on April 24, 1930, at which time Prof. McClain carefully outlined the plan being contemplated for a standard Brethren theological seminary, setting forth the imperative need for such a school if our denomination is to be provided with adequate leaders in these days of higher standards. He emphasized that it cannot be expected that the arts college alone can provide this specialized

training. He also expressed the opinion that the Ashland College campus would not be the best location for the seminary for very definite reasons, but said that such a location might be agreed upon provided the college board would approve and support a definite "Seminary Program."

Such a program, he felt, must include the placing of the seminary on a strict graduate basis, that is, that ordinarily those entering should be college graduates; and the faculty should include no less than four professors. If the experiment of having college and seminary operating on the same campus succeeded, steps should be taken to erect a separate building especially adapted to seminary usage; the seminary should publish its own catalog and bulletin; and there should be the appointment of a seminary committee of at least five members, appointed by the president of the board in consultation with the seminary faculty, the dean of the seminary to be a member *ex officio* of this committee.

When discussion ceased and the matter was put to a vote, there was no dissenting voice. This did not mean that every member of the board was wholeheartedly in favor of the proposal. They were not. But it seemed to be the only way out of a serious problem. Had the action of the board been opposite to what it was, it probably would have meant that the seminary would have opened its doors in southern California, and much of the support in money, students, and interest then directed to Ashland College would have gone to the west-coast location. And so the vote was unanimous, in spite of some mingled feelings, to accept the proposals presented by Prof. McClain and locate the seminary on the college campus.

Incident to this acceptance the board called Prof. McClain to reorganize the seminary on the new graduate basis and to become its head with the title of associate dean. Dr. J. Allen Miller, who had for many years acted as dean of the seminary department in the college, was asked to continue as dean. Prof. McClain, however, because of his vision and experience, was vested with the responsibility of inaugurating and directing the new venture. The fall of 1930 was set as the date for the

opening of the new school, a date which increases in significance with the passing of the years because it marked the beginning of standard theological education in The Brethren Church. Theological education on the graduate level commenced in The Brethren Church at this time. Ashland Theological Seminary has continued to the present time. In 1937 Grace Theological Seminary also came into existence, modelled very much after the pattern used in the former institution. A forward step in Christian education had been taken.

In September 1930 the newly organized seminary began operation. It was a humble beginning, with only four college graduates making up the student body. Some, of course, had misgivings, and waited to see how the venture would materialize. Doubtless, as time revealed, there were others who possessed an inner resentment at the launching of the new project.

According to the plan that had been agreed upon, there were four professors who composed the teaching staff. There was Dr. J. Allen Miller, who acted as dean and head of the department of New Testament and Greek, with an adjunct in Philosophy. There was Dr. Alva J. McClain, who acted as associate dean and head of the department of Theology and Christian Evidences, with an adjunct in English Bible. Then there was Prof. Melvin A. Stuckey, who headed the department of Homiletics and Practical Theology, teaching also in the field of Church History. The fourth teacher was Dr. Kenneth M. Monroe, who headed the department of Old Testament and Hebrew and who gave some time to the subject of Archeology.

These were all able men and well qualified to fill the positions assigned to them. It was with understandable justification, therefore, that Dr. J. Allen Miller wrote in the *Brethren Evangelist* of September 20, 1930, in a special boxed article regarding the need for advanced training for the ministry, as follows: "We believe the most insistent and absolutely essential need of The Brethren Church today is the training and sending forth of a consecrated ministry through the agency of an efficiently manned training school. Such a school we have opened for

SHADOWS OF AN IMPENDING CRISIS

the first time this week at Ashland College. The Brethren Theological Seminary will be a graduate school of such rank as the highest type of evangelical faith and life joined with a ripened and broad scholarship can offer."⁵

That the blessing of God was upon the new undertaking may be seen in the fact that the student body increased from four students in 1930 to ten in 1931, eighteen in 1932, twenty in 1933, and twenty-four by 1936-37.⁶ Not only were those in the seminary student body being blessed by the teaching in the new school, but students in the college were also being instructed in Bible courses by teachers from the seminary, to the end that many of them were thinking about entering the seminary in due time. Thus, in the midst of some conditions that seemed discouraging at this time, there were encouraging evidences of God's favor that promised a stronger ministry and church in days to come.

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⁵J. Allen Miller, "The Brethren Theological Seminary," *Brethren Evangelist*, Sept. 20, 1930, p. 2.

⁶Herman A. Hoyt, "The Academic History of Grace Theological Seminary," 1951 *Charis* (Grace Seminary year book), p. 41.

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*The Shadows Thicken*
(1930-1937)

In spite of the blessings attendant upon the organization of the new seminary and the prospects for a better trained ministry in the days that were ahead, clouds of trouble began to gather. This resulted from the inharmonious presence of the college and seminary on the same campus. What many feared would take place began to be realized. Though not fully expressed at the time, there was a distinct difference in ideals between the college and the seminary. The same basic difference was present several years before this. The writer felt it when he was in college during the years 1922-1925. The situation was only accentuated following the establishment of the seminary.

Some of the college teachers expressed ideas that were foreign to evangelical belief. When seminary professors were interviewed by students regarding such teachings, of course, difficulties arose. Nowhere near all the college faculty belonged to The Brethren Church. This caused difficulty, since there was a tendency to be critical of the Brethren doctrinal position. One chapel speaker presented an opposite viewpoint from another. Some of the college professors had very liberal ideas on the matter of worldliness. This, too, caused tension. Many of the college students had little or no vital Christian experience and so had ideas totally different from those held by the seminary constituency. A critical spirit inevitably developed.

Rumors of the difficulties at Ashland began to filter through to the pastors and churches that had young people on the campus. The writer well remembers questions that were put to

him by one young man from his church who was greatly disturbed by some things to which he had listened in the classrooms at Ashland, and by the varied ideals existing between the students of the college and those of the seminary. Effort was made to assure the young man that the situation as yet had not become stabilized, but, given time, things would work out satisfactorily. However, such proved not to be the case. The clouds continued to gather.

The existing situation was keenly felt by the members of the seminary faculty, but they were never able successfully to cope with the situation, even though every possible effort, it seems, was made in that direction. The board of trustees was notified of the situation on different occasions. Professor McClain repeatedly protested to the president and dean of the college, urging a rectification of the situation, but with no satisfactory response. Through a committee appointed by the board, an official statement of faith, including the fundamental Christian doctrines, but omitting the distinctive Brethren ordinances, was prepared and adopted after a bitter struggle with the college officials. It was felt that such a statement was necessary as a standard to determine the fitness of teachers for the college and seminary. The passage of this statement was only an empty victory because it was never seriously applied to the individual members of the college faculty. The seminary faculty, of course, heartily endorsed it and published it in their catalog. The college refused to publish it in their catalog.

Conditions became worse in the months that followed, despite the fact that Professor McClain had now been made the dean of the seminary (1933), replacing Dr. J. Allen Miller, who was made dean emeritus. There was increasing concern over the failure to adhere strictly to the statement of faith which had been adopted. Students were becoming more and more perplexed by reason of uncertain sounds emanating from certain classrooms of the college. Many pastors were tremendously disturbed at the lack of harmony between the college and the seminary. Friction appeared to be increasing in matters of faith and conduct.

However, things seemed to brighten a bit in the year 1935. A new president was elected to replace Dr. E. E. Jacobs, who had resigned his position because of pressure and advancing years. Dr. Charles L. Anspach, a former dean of Ashland College and a brilliant teacher in the field of education, was chosen for this position. He was a popular choice. His installation into office, which took place in the new college gymnasium, was a gala affair which was well attended. The ceremonies and the enthusiasm of the occasion linger in the memory of the writer, as have few gatherings in The Brethren Church. Everybody was sure that Dr. Anspach was the right man for a difficult task.

He had sensed the seriousness of the situation on the campus and after having conferred at length with Dean McClain, stated that his policy would be to steer the college in the direction of Wheaton College ideals. Wheaton was mentioned because of its long and outstanding success as a college with a conservative Christian viewpoint. It was easy to envision a similar success for Ashland. Wheaton's halls were crowded and surely there was room for another strong Christian college in the north central area. The horizon was bright with prospect of better things. At once Dr. Anspach received enthusiastic support from all quarters of the denomination.

But as it is sometimes true that there is sunshine and calm just before a storm, so it happened in The Brethren Church. It was not long after the scenes of gladness and confidence to which we have referred were experienced that there broke the storm of uncertainty and mistrust. Ere long it was evident that the new president did not intend to carry out the program of renovation in Ashland College to which he had given his approval. Suddenly he began to show a different attitude toward the whole situation at Ashland, especially toward the seminary and its friends.

Just how to account for this sudden reversal of attitude is not altogether clear. Was he influenced by men on the board and outside who were out of sympathy with the seminary? Or did he come to the quick conclusion that the ideals of the semi-

nary with regard to doctrine and practice were at variance with his own ideals? Or was there some other reason? Probably the full answer is known only to Dr. Anspach and to God. One thing sure is that there was a change in attitude, and Ashland College was never seriously directed toward Wheaton College ideals. As a result of this failure, there developed a conflict which resulted in a division of The Brethren Church into two camps of widely differing viewpoints, to say nothing of the damage which was done to Ashland Seminary.

Mention will be made here of a few things which reflected a changed attitude on the part of the new president. For one thing, early in his administration he proposed certain constitutional changes which would allow a substantial increase of non-Brethren membership on the board and which would deprive the church districts of their former elective powers and thus make the board self-perpetuating. This posed serious dangers to the welfare of the college and especially to that of the seminary. Furthermore, he began to reduce the comparatively small allowance made to the seminary for essential activities, and (which made matters worse for the seminary) he refused to allow a fourth man to be added to the faculty after the resignation of Dr. Kenneth M. Monroe.

Probably the thing that stirred up the most resentment from the seminary and its supporters was Dr. Anspach's effort to establish a double standard of conduct for college students upon the campus—a stricter standard for the pre-seminary-college students and a more lenient standard for the regular college students. This plan was proposed by the president to the board in its meeting of 1936 in connection with his report that some of the pre-seminary students had been circulating Christian tracts upon the campus much to the irritation of some of the regular students. In each case the views of the other group were to be "respected and protected."¹ The board passed the plan. One's imagination does not need much liberty to picture

¹ A. J. McClain, *Charis*, 1951, p. 25. Read Dr. McClain's article in which this quotation appears for the best available account of the background and origin of Grace Theological Seminary.

the result of this sort of thing. Two members of the board resigned in protest—Dr. L. S. Bauman and Rev. C. H. Ashman.

Quite understandably, the Southern California District from which the latter two men came was greatly disturbed. The National Ministerial Association of the latter district faced the problem with great care and diligence and finally prepared the now famous "Open Letter" addressed to Dr. Anspach. This letter presented the difficulties localized at Ashland College and appealed for a rectification of the wrongs as they appeared to the senders of the letter. The letter contained nine protests with justifying reasons for each. *First*, it protested "against what seems to us an effort to apply gag rule to the members of the board of trustees who found themselves in the minority at the meeting held in Ashland on April 29, 1936."²

Second, it protested vigorously "against the giving of a dominant place on the board of trustees to wealthy men of Ashland who are not in sympathy either with Brethren doctrines or standards of life."³ It was pointed out that one of these men, who was influential on the board because of his wealth, had dogmatically affirmed that it was his belief that Christian Scientists, Buddhists, Hindus and the like were all Christians, worshiped the same God, and would ultimately be found in the same heaven.

Third, the letter protested "against the principle which you are apparently favoring; namely, that the control of Ashland College and Seminary should be to a greater extent transferred to men who not only are not Brethren, but who are not even numbered among the fundamental forces outside our church."⁴ The protest recognized the financial problem faced by the college but argued that if there was assurance on the part of the church as a whole as to the loyalty of the college to the Word and to the church it professed to serve, this matter would be largely solved.

² Open Letter, The Ministerial Board of Southern California, 1936, p. 1. (Copy in author's file.)

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Fourth, and the longest of the protests, was against the adoption of the policy of a double standard of conduct on the college campus. According to this policy, those students who were preparing for definite Christian service, such as the ministry or missionary endeavor, would be expected to live according to a more restricted standard, whereas those who were not preparing for such service would be free to live by a more relaxed standard. With reasoned indignation this policy was refuted as being utterly out of harmony with the ideal of a true Christian college. The things of the flesh and the things of the Spirit are like oil and water. They will not mix.⁵

Fifth, the letter protested "against your [Dr. Anspach's] own decision to throw the influence of your own life on the side of group two,"⁶ that is, the group subject to the lesser standard. The definite basis for this protest was a statement by Dr. Anspach at the trustees' meeting of April 29, 1936, to the effect that he, his wife, and his daughters attend the "movies" and that such attendance was a personal matter and nobody else had any business to be concerned. The protest took issue with Dr. Anspach at this point, declaring that when a person occupies a place of prominent leadership, it is somebody's business besides his own what he does.

Sixth, the letter voiced a protest against Dr. Anspach's repudiation of the ministry of tract distribution on the campus of Ashland College. Some of the students, classified under group one of the double standard, had been doing this sort of thing. This brought forth words condemning this long-approved method of evangelization by the new president. The Southern California ministers thought this attitude to be exceedingly strange in view of the president's declared purpose of the year before "to pattern Ashland College after Wheaton College."⁷

Seventh, there was also a protest against the existing conflict on the campus between the college and the seminary. That such

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

a rift existed and was becoming more and more serious no one could deny. The protest argued the unreasonableness of such a condition and predicted ruin if it was allowed to continue.⁸

Eighth, the letter protested "against the handicapping of the seminary by the reduction of its faculty from four members to three, leaving the important department of Old Testament without a professor."⁹ This seemed to the California ministers a definite effort to cut the efficiency of the seminary.

Ninth, and finally, the letter protested "against what seems to be an organized effort on the part of a small group connected with the college to wrest the college from the control of the church and deliver it over, body and soul, to a group of Ashland people, including a number of persons now on the faculty of the Arts College, who have little or no interest in The Brethren Church, and whose main desire, judged by their actions, is to make Ashland College a regional institution."¹⁰ This protest accused President Anspach of working in harmony with this viewpoint which, if adopted, would mean the loss of the college to the control of The Brethren Church.

This "Open Letter" was first addressed to "Professor Charles L. Anspach" under date of June 16, 1936. Then, after no serious attempt had been made by Dr. Anspach to refute the specific charges therein stated or to rectify the matters protested, and because of widespread inquiry for information regarding this important matter, under date of July 31 of the same year the content of the letter was made known to the churches. The writer still has the copy with its explanatory announcement which was sent to him when he was pastor of the First Brethren Church in Washington, D.C. The public revelation of the letter acted as a bombshell, rocking the Brotherhood from coast to coast. Viewpoints were quickly formed. Animosities were aroused. Articles on both sides of the question began to appear in *The Brethren Evangelist*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

There were now two camps within the confines of The Brethren Church. One camp was determined to be loyal to Ashland College, its board of trustees, its president, and its type of teaching, come what may. The other group was convinced that the viewpoint of the seminary which was fighting for its life upon the campus because of its emphasis upon salvation by grace, separated Christian living, and a higher standard of preparation for the Christian ministry, was the viewpoint most in harmony with the Word of God and true Brethrenism. The Brethren Church was now plunged into the throes of a controversy similar to that experienced previously in many other denominations.

Conditions were at white heat by the time General Conference convened in August of 1936. The situation at the college was the matter of supreme interest to the largely attended convention that summer. The "Ashland College problem" got an early hearing at the conference and was fully discussed. At this juncture in the proceedings there seemed to be a general feeling among the delegates that an investigation ought to be made of the college. Feeling seemed to prevail that if conditions of "liberalism" in doctrine and laxity of conduct were present on the campus, they ought to be rectified. The result was that the conference passed, after bitter opposition from the college, a motion to appoint a committee of seven men to investigate the condition causing the disturbance and report back to the General Conference in 1937. The personnel of the committee was as follows: R. D. Barnard, C. A. Stewart, R. F. Porte, William H. Schaffer, Jr., Roy Patterson, E. H. Wolfe, and H. V. Wall.

The career of this committee was a hectic one. In the first place, the committee was reduced to five members by the resignation of R. D. Barnard and Roy Patterson with justifiable reason. Then, after the committee had outlined a program of procedure but before it left the conference grounds, it was informed by the college administration that it would have to wait for an invitation from the College Board which would not be meeting until the spring of 1937. It thus was made

evident that the will of the church had to bend to the will of the college and not vice versa.

The committee therefore did not actually function until the meeting of the board of trustees on June 1, 1937. When they began work, they proceeded to investigate the protests which had been sounded in the "Open Letter" from the Southern California Brethren Ministerial Association, for it was that instrument which had caused a large portion of the disturbance. The investigation confirmed the protests in the letter in the following respects: (1) The board of trustees of the College, in its last regular session in Ashland, June 1, 1937, adopted a new constitution which included an amendment allowing an enlarged non-Brethren constituency on the board and weakening the church's control of the college. This was done by a vote of 24 to 3 in spite of the vote of conference in 1936 against it.¹¹ (2) Through the means of a questionnaire sent to students and former students of Ashland College, it was ascertained that there was a growing antagonism between the arts college and the seminary, "that the scriptural standards for the 'separated life' were not only held in derision but openly opposed by members of the arts college faculty,"¹² and that there was a general feeling that Ashland College strengthened the faith of the students in Christ only in so far as they came in contact with the Gospel teams or seminary activities. (3) It also confirmed the protest of the "Open Letter" regarding questionable teaching in the classrooms of the college. In response to a question in the above-mentioned questionnaire as to whether the recipient had received unorthodox teaching from any professor and the nature of it, a host of answers were received indicating that things were not well doctrinally at the college. Testimonies were given that the virgin birth of Christ, the new birth, the second coming of Christ, and the blood atonement had been denied or ridiculed in the classroom; that salvation is by good works or the "golden rule"; and that in

¹¹ *Report of the National Conference Committee on Investigation of Ashland College, 1937, Item 1. (Copy in author's file.)*

¹² *Ibid.*, Item 2.

general there was a minimizing of the doctrinal position as held by the seminary group upon the campus.¹³ (4) The committee further reported that the *Ashland Collegian*, the campus paper, had been printing highly objectionable matter for a Christian institution.¹⁴ (5) Finally, it reported that what the Open Letter had affirmed was true; namely, that there was friction between the administration of Ashland College and Ashland Theological Seminary. The seminary faculty contended for strict adherence to the standards of faith and institutional objectives as printed in the college catalog, whereas the college allowed itself ample freedom in these matters.¹⁵ All five members of the investigating committee signed the report.

Tempers flared as the report was presented to the conference. Former students of the college were on the scene ready to give oral reports of the things they had witnessed at the college. Had all of these been allowed to speak, it is doubtful if the situation would have been changed. The conference followed their leaders, and when the matter was put to a vote, the two-thirds rule was invoked and it was ruled by a very close vote not to accept the report of the Ashland College Investigating Committee.¹⁶ Certain facts, however, had been made evident by the report. The voting in an hour of heat and confusion could not change them. There was need for a transformation on the campus at Ashland College. The report had succeeded in bringing into focus what was wrong with the institution. Charges of injudicious procedure on the part of the investigating committee could not change these facts.

We have run ahead of our story just a bit. We must now retrace our steps and follow the actions which led directly to the organization of Grace Theological Seminary. We shall do this in our next chapter.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Item 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Item 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Item 5.

¹⁶ Conference Minutes, *Brethren Annual*, 1938, p. 20.

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*Grace Theological
Seminary Is Born
(1937)*

13

The days and weeks immediately following the General Conference of 1936 were filled with increasing difficulty. The delegates went back to local churches to face situations of division and heartbreak. Some of these delegates were perplexed and confused. They were unable to understand the full significance of the situation. In some instances delegates went back to churches which were practically a hundred percent for one viewpoint or the other in the denominational controversy. In many other churches the two viewpoints were represented. This meant ensuing conflict. Ofttimes there were divisions in families, as well as among neighbors. Wounds were inflicted that the following years have not healed. Only those who have passed through the experiences of those days can appreciate the extent of the hurt in many instances. Religious convictions and sentiments of long standing were two factors that had much to do with determining the attitudes of those days.

On the Ashland College campus, the situation was tense. Prospects were not bright for more harmony between the college and the seminary. The College Statement of Faith had been adopted and printed in its catalog for 1937, but there was no enthusiasm for its observance.

Something of the seriousness of the situation may be gathered from an incident which occurred early in 1937. The faculty was considering a code of "rules and regulations" for their organization. In addition to a number of other very reasonable grounds for the dismissal of members of the teaching staff, Dean A. J. McClain moved the addition of another cause;

namely, "for teaching anything contrary to the College Statement of Faith." The response was symptomatic. The faculty was against it. Only five voted in favor of it when a roll-call vote was demanded—the three seminary professors, A. J. McClain, H. A. Hoyt, and M. A. Stuckey; and two college teachers, L. L. Garber and Allan Scholl. A sad reflection in this incident is that the president of the college, Dr. Charles Anspach, who had promised to turn the college to the "right," in the direction of Wheaton College ideals, prefaced his emphatic "No" in the voting with a dogmatic speech against the application of the College Statement of Faith.

By this time it was evident that there were two irreconcilable groups on the campus of Ashland College. The above incident indicates that there was a doctrinal difference in the two groups. This was by far the most serious difference and one which had again and again reared its ugly head in various ways, but now the distinction was becoming crystal clear. A point had been reached where a crisis could be expected.

This crisis was realized when suddenly and unexpectedly two members of the seminary faculty, Professors Alva J. McClain and Herman A. Hoyt, were dismissed from the institution. It was at the time of the annual meeting of the board of trustees, June 2, 1937. Dean McClain had given a careful report on the status of things in relation to the college and seminary, in which he pointed out that from the time of the organization of the seminary in 1930 until the present, the advisability of operating the seminary on the same campus with the college had been seriously questioned. He then had recommended that the seminary be separated from the arts college. No action was taken on this recommendation at that time, but at a later session without leveling any definite charges against them, the board requested the resignations of Dean McClain and Professor Hoyt. The following statement is taken from the minutes of the board and appeared in the *Evangelist* of June 12, 1937:

That the president of the college be instructed to secure by resignation or dismissal the elimination of Professors Alva J. McClain

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and Herman Hoyt from the seminary faculty, because of a continued lack of harmony and cooperation between the arts college and seminary, which are essential to the success of the institution.¹

The two professors under consideration refused to resign their positions and so were served with letters of dismissal on June 2. Consternation swept through the ranks of The Brethren Church. Upon hearing of the dismissal, the writer well remembers the amazement which came over the members of the Foreign Missionary Board which was meeting in Ashland at that time. They were appalled by the audacity of this maneuver. There was a sharing of this feeling throughout the Brotherhood. It was known that conditions were serious at Ashland. Many anticipated a break sooner or later, but no one apparently was prepared for such an early bombshell.

Dr. McClain's ability and popularity as a Bible teacher was not only recognized throughout The Brethren Church, but in conservative circles as well. Professor Hoyt, although young, was recognized as a brilliant Greek scholar. Dr. J. Allen Miller (d. 1935), whom Professor Hoyt succeeded as teacher of Greek and New Testament in the seminary, had pronounced Professor Hoyt the ablest Greek student he ever had in his classes. Before his death, Dr. Miller had indicated Professor Hoyt as his personal choice to succeed himself in the department of Greek. The dismissal of two such able men was the boldest stroke the college group had yet taken. It proved to be the action that brought about a definite division in The Brethren Church.

What now should be the procedure of the two men who had been dismissed from Ashland Seminary? What about their followers? What should be the next step, if any, in defending the viewpoint held by the dismissed professors? Present in Ashland at this time were a number of men sympathetic to the dismissed professors including the aforementioned members of the Foreign Board. Most of these were in accord with the stand which the ousted professors had taken. There was a minority on the College board of trustees who were in sympathy with

¹ Editorial notes, *The Brethren Evangelist*, June 12, 1937, p. 4.

this stand. There were students of the college and seminary, and a few nearby pastors, who quickly registered disapproval of the action against McClain and Hoyt. Upon the invitation of the late Dr. J. C. Beal (d. Jan. 30, 1944), who was then the business manager of *The Brethren Evangelist*, and who formerly had been a teacher in the college, a prayer meeting to seek divine direction was held in his home at 100 Lincoln Way, on the evening of the expulsion of McClain and Hoyt.

This was one of the memorable prayer meetings in the history of The Brethren Church. The writer never drives by the home where that meeting was held without feeling that this was one of the definite places where God's will was made plain. The meeting was very informal. There was no prolonged discussion, but there was a general agreement that something ought to be done to carry on the ideals and faith of the school which had been founded in 1930, and to provide for the students of the seminary who almost unanimously had said they could never return to the Ashland campus as students.

With burdened hearts the assembled group went to prayer. Upon conclusion of the season of intercession, Dr. Louis S. Bauman, who along with Rev. Charles H. Ashman, had been refused a seat on the College board of trustees at its recent meeting, wrote a personal check for a new seminary in The Brethren Church, saying as he did so, "I want to give the first gift to the new school." From that day until his death in November 1950, he continued to be a stalwart friend of the new institution.

At the meeting a paper was circulated for the purpose of obtaining the signatures of all those present who were interested in the establishment of a school molded after the ideals of the seminary founded in 1930. Everyone present signed the paper except Prof. Melvin A. Stuckey, who said he first wanted to learn what his status was "on the hill." Actually, he never did affiliate himself with the new seminary group, although he had often been outspoken in his denunciations of the teaching and methods which characterized the college, and appeared by word and attitude to be on the side of uncompromising orthodoxy.

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There were eighteen signers at this first meeting whose names are recorded in the minutes of Grace Theological Seminary.^a Other names were added the following day and thereafter.

At this same time a tentative organization was formed, which was given the name, "The Brethren Biblical Seminary Association." The late Rev. A. V. Kimmell, pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was chosen as president; Rev. R. D. Barnard, pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Dayton, Ohio, as vice-president; Professor Herman A. Hoyt (the next day Prof. Hoyt resigned and was replaced by Rev. R. E. Gingrich, pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Akron, Ohio) as secretary; and Dr. Henry V. Wall, an influential layman of the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California, as treasurer.^b An advisory council of thirty members was also appointed to guide the destinies of the new project until such time as a regular board of trustees should be elected. This was an historic organization, for out of it came Grace Theological Seminary.

On July 28 and 29 of the same year, after time had elapsed for more mature thinking on the new venture, the executive committee of the Brethren Biblical Seminary Association, together with a few members of the advisory council, met in Philadelphia to make some definite plans for launching the new school. Careful consideration was given to the name of the new school, whereupon, after eliminating other possibilities, it was decided to adopt the name "Grace Theological Seminary."^c This name immediately received almost universal approval.

It was decided to accept the cordial invitation from the Ellet Brethren Church, of Akron, Ohio, as the temporary location of the school, unless after careful investigation insurmountable legal and educational restrictions were found to exist. The minutes on this matter provided that in case insurmountable

^a Minutes of Grace Theological Seminary, p. 2, Minute No. 9.

^b *Ibid.*, p. 1.

^c *Ibid.*, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Brethren Biblical Seminary Association, p. 5, minute 1.

difficulties were found, Fort Wayne, Indiana, be the first choice outside of Ohio.⁵ No such difficulties were encountered, and so the school planned to use the facilities of the Ellet Church.

At this same meeting, Prof. Alva J. McClain was extended an invitation to become the head of Grace Theological Seminary and Prof. Herman A. Hoyt was invited to become a full-time member of the faculty. Rev. Homer A. Kent, then pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Washington, D. C., was also invited to become a part-time teacher in the institution, "his teaching load and hours to be determined in such a manner as not to interfere with his present relationship as pastor of the Brethren Church at Washington, D. C."⁶ In addition, a provision was made whereby other teachers could be invited to the school to assist, Prof. McClain and the executive committee to be in charge of this matter. The teachers mentioned above accepted the invitations submitted and thus the faculty for the first year was arranged.

The executive committee made arrangements for publicizing the new venture, for procuring a charter, and for appealing for funds to support the new school. The committee estimated the cost to launch and operate during the first year would be about \$8,000. Also it was decided to lay before the General Conference of 1937 for its approval and acceptance the plan for the new seminary as outlined by the Biblical Seminary Association.

Thus the movement looking toward the opening of a new seminary in the fall of 1937 was quite well crystallized. Grace Seminary became the most talked-about institution in The Brethren Church. It became the rallying point of those who for so long had sought without success a rectification of conditions on the Ashland College campus. It became the object of bitter hatred on the part of those who could see no ill at Ashland. From then on The Brethren Church was divided into two groups of definite designations, the Ashland College group, and the Grace Seminary group. The situation was discussed pro and con in every church, in district conferences, in the church

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5, minute 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5f., minute 5.

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paper, through the mail, and was sure to be a vital issue in the General Conference of August 1937. The situation had already been brought pretty much into the open at the 1936 conference, as we have previously seen, in connection with the appointment of the Ashland College Investigating Committee.

Not long after the organization of the Brethren Biblical Seminary Association which was responsible for the origin of Grace Theological Seminary, the Ashland College group formed an opposing organization which was called The Brethren Loyalty Association, Inc., with headquarters, of course, at Ashland, Ohio. This organization, as its name suggests, was devoted to stressing loyalty to age-long Brethren institutions, Ashland College in particular, as fundamental to true Brethrenism. It, of course, looked upon Grace Seminary as an enemy institution diametrically opposed to the loyalty it advocated. Expressive of the attitude of this organization is a statement by one of their chief representatives, Dr. W. S. Bell, in an article entitled "Who Are the Disturbers of Peace in the Brethren Church?" It reads as follows:

Why This Grace Seminary? It is an organization that is dividing the Church. Two seminaries in a small denomination like ours, whose instructors are at variance with each other—*Means Two Churches.*

Who Authorized This Seminary? A disaffected group that would impose their will on the College Board. A hand-picked group who asked no counsel but of themselves.¹

Thus it can readily be seen that Dr. Bell and his associates held the Grace Seminary group totally responsible for the division within The Brethren Church.

With an atmosphere of tension hanging over the denomination, the 1937 conference met on August 23 with a much larger attendance than usual because of the controversy. As before related, the report of the Ashland College Investigating Committee was presented with a strong reaction both for and against it. The sharp division in the conference on the matter is reflected in the vote of 275 to 263 in favor of the motion to

¹ Files of Homer A. Kent.

accept the report, though the motion lost by reason of invocation of the two-thirds rule. This vote, however, made it clear that the new seminary had behind it a formidable following.

In order to stimulate interest in Grace Seminary, looking toward its opening at Akron in the following October, a special rally was held one evening following the General Conference session. This memorable meeting was held in the Winona Lake Presbyterian Church with a capacity crowd of over five hundred people present. This meeting had no connection with General Conference and was conducted by the leaders of the new seminary movement. It was a time of singing, testimony, prayer, and announcement concerning the definite plans for the opening of Grace Theological Seminary. Enthusiasm rose to new heights.

At this time the first large gift came to the seminary in the form of one thousand dollars from Miss Estella Myers, pioneer missionary to Africa. This acted as a token of God's favor upon the new venture and stimulated other gifts for the school. So greatly impressed was the late Dr. William E. Biederwolf, director of the Winona Lake Christian Assembly, who was present, with the proceedings and spirit of the gathering that he was led to invite Grace Seminary to make its home at Winona Lake, Indiana. Prospects were becoming brighter and brighter for the opening of the school.

Grace Theological Seminary opened in Akron, Ohio, on October 4, 1937, with a student body of thirty-nine. Significant in this enrollment was the presence of all the former students in Ashland Seminary but two. The Akron church accorded all possible hospitality to the new institution. Classes met in every available space in the church. Chapel services were conducted in the main auditorium. The very limited library composed mainly of books loaned by the faculty was located in a very narrow space behind the pulpit rostrum. In spite of limited facilities, there was a vigorous spirit prevalent among both students and faculty. There was a fine spirit of fellowship sustained with the evangelical churches of Akron. Some of them opened their pulpits to faculty and students for preaching ministries.

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On April 8, 1938, the legal charter under the laws of Ohio had been received and the seminary was thus able to proceed as a fully organized institution. On June 3 of that year the first class was graduated, each member of the class of three receiving the Bachelor of Divinity degree. The members of this first class were Kenneth B. Ashman, former president of the Ashland Seminary student body, Robert E. A. Miller, and Russell Williams. Each one of these men has become successful as a pastor within The Brethren Church.

From its beginning Grace Seminary has been controlled by a board of trustees composed of twenty-seven members of The Brethren Church elected to serve for a period of three years each. Of course, there may be re-elections. The first permanent board was elected at the first corporation meeting held in the Presbyterian church at Winona Lake, Indiana, on September 2, 1938.⁸ Prior to this, however, as a requirement of law, there had been a temporary board of trustees composed of the original members of the advisory council of the seminary association, exclusive of those who were mission pastors or salaried employees of national boards. This temporary board had served during the 1937-1938 school year.

The ultimate control of the seminary rests in a body of corporate members composed of those who give to its financial support and are in agreement with its purposes. This corporation is responsible for the election of the members of the board of trustees. This type of organization is very similar to that used by The Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church and which has proved so successful in the operation of that organization since 1900. This type of organization together with a carefully prepared statement of faith to which each trustee and teacher is required "to subscribe annually in writing"⁹ seems to have secured Grace Theological Seminary as a stronghold for orthodoxy in all the days ahead until Jesus comes.

Two years of its infant period were spent in the church at

⁸ Minutes, *op. cit.*, p. 27, minute 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

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Akron, Ohio. But from the beginning this location was looked upon as only temporary. Soon these quarters proved inadequate for a growing school. And so, after careful consideration of other places for a permanent location, the school moved to Winona Lake, Indiana, in response to Dr. Biederwolf's invitation, to begin its operation there in the fall of 1939. The school occupied the upper floor of the three-story national headquarters building owned by the Free Methodist Church. Amid a cordial atmosphere and in a central location the school looked forward to prosperous days.

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Climactic Years
1938 and 1939

14

The years of 1938 and 1939 were difficult years in The Brethren Church. With the establishment of Grace Seminary there was a focusing of attention upon that institution, upon its faculty and students, upon the things for which it stood, and upon the growing support which it was gathering. Many were bitter in their criticisms of the school and blamed it for all the difficulties which were rocking the denomination. Some of these were determined if possible to bring about its destruction. They argued that the denomination was too small for two theological seminaries, especially with opposing viewpoints. In different ways they sought to show that only the seminary under the control of Ashland College could properly represent true "Brethrenism."

However, Grace Seminary continued to operate in spite of this attitude, and constantly gathered new friends. The policy of the new school was not to antagonize Ashland College and its seminary nor to work against them, but to proceed according to its own ideals. It felt that liberty should be allowed it in this respect and appealed to the original charter of The Brethren Church filed in 1883 for support in this matter.

But the opponents of the Grace Seminary viewpoint would not agree to such liberty. They took to the field by pen and voice to show that Grace Seminary had no right to exist and that the beliefs it held were foreign to "historic Brethrenism."

The *Brethren Evangelist* was flooded with articles by proponents of both sides of the controversy. There were "statements," "open letters," "explanations," and "resolutions," be-

sides endless editorials and articles which appeared one after another trying to clarify the situation. However, in most instances, such articles tended only to establish more immovably their readers in the position they had already taken.

Statements by R. Paul Miller, secretary of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church (Dec. 18, 1937) and Louis S. Bauman, secretary-treasurer of the Foreign Missionary Society (Jan. 1, 1938), appeared shortly after the opening of Grace Seminary, seeking to answer charges of undue seminary influence in the operation of these two arms of the church. Such men as Claud Studebaker, president of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, and Freeman Ankrum, first vice president of the same board, repeatedly stressed the Ashland viewpoint. By this time the controversy had entered into every phase of the denominational work in one way or another.

Individual churches passed resolutions relative to their position in the controversy. The First Brethren Church, of Cleveland, Ohio, passed resolutions severing all relationship with Ashland College and withdrawing further support of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. The Listie, Aleppo, and Uniontown, Pennsylvania, churches severed relations with the old missionary board and resolved to support the newly organized Brethren Home Missions Council. About the same time, the First Brethren Church, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, officially withdrew all support from the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church and expressed sympathy for the cause of Grace Seminary and the Brethren Home Missions Council. The First Brethren Church, of Dayton, Ohio, in a special meeting held November 29, 1938, passed resolutions severing relations with Ashland College and Seminary, the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, and pledging support to Grace Seminary and the Brethren Home Missions Council. This latter action was to produce major reactions, inasmuch as there was an influential Ashland College constituency within the church. More about this later.

Not all of the churches took this absolute position. Some, like the Clay City, Indiana, church, which had the two view-

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points within its constituency, looked for the day when the two groups would get together and, with respect to its home-mission offering, voted to retain it in its treasury until such time as the Brethren Home Missions Council and the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church became one unit in The Brethren Church. Other churches containing members on both sides of the controversy decided to let their membership support whichever viewpoint they saw fit. Thus appeals from the two viewpoints were presented and the offerings divided according to designation. In a few of the churches this attitude has persisted through the years. However, most of the churches have felt it necessary to take a definite stand one way or the other, thus becoming either an Ashland or Grace group church.

It was this situation within the churches across the Brotherhood that led many to suggest that there ought to be some kind of a roundtable conference with equal representation from both sides of the controversy which would seek a settlement of the difficulties which were disturbing the peace of the denomination. Editor Charles W. Mayes wrote an editorial in the December 10, 1938, issue of *The Brethren Evangelist*, urging such a discussion. In part he said:

The desire for a settlement around a table was so intense last summer at the General Conference that the group favoring Grace Theological Seminary at one of the meetings held in the Westminster Presbyterian Church selected a representative committee of ten to be in readiness to meet with the College group at any time the latter might desire. Let the respective groups come together and state what they have against the other. Let the groups get down together in prayer before God, that the Spirit of God may indicate who is working for the exaltation of self, and who is working for the glory of God. Let the actions of the past be fully evaluated as to whether the same are fair and honorable. Why not talk it over! Certainly those who know they are right have no fear to meet others. Let the happenings be recorded that any who desire to know may read the story in detail. Let everything be uncovered. Let the facts be told. Let men face their statements and actions. Let the groups remain in conference until there is some settlement. We believe that nothing would be more satisfying to the mass of sincere laymen in our church than just this. We will be glad to know the feeling of the Brethren from coast to coast who favor an immediate conference by representatives from both groups.

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But such a gathering never materialized. Each group went on contending that it represented true Brethrenism and that the other had departed therefrom. Tension and bitterness continued to increase and manifested themselves in the major portion of the local churches, in the district conferences, and in the General Conferences. The situation had a retarding effect upon the denominational work as a whole. The church was so busy agitating its difficulties and seeking their solution that it did not have time or heart for an aggressive forward movement. The General Conference of 1938, meeting in Winona Lake, though one of the largest in history (665 delegates), suffered a dampening effect from the cloud that hung over it. However, it weathered the storm for another year and closed its sessions ingloriously on Saturday afternoon, September 2, when, because of the tension prevailing, Moderator Melvin A. Stuckey "arbitrarily declared conference adjourned *sine die*."¹ The delegates returned to their churches with heavy hearts, to face situations that in the end would mean division.

A perusal of the pages of *The Brethren Evangelist* for the year 1939 will make clear the elements of conflict during this distressing time. More and more it was becoming evident that the issue involved was doctrinal above everything else. There was a serious difference in belief between the Ashland College group and the Grace Seminary group. While the Grace Seminary group laid great stress upon the grace of God and its place in man's salvation, the Ashland College group tended toward a legalistic view. Revolving about this pivotal point were discussions on the essentiality of baptism, the place of obedience in Christianity, the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer, the significance of the Sermon on the Mount, the matter of congregational government, and a host of other matters more or less related to the main issue.

A series of articles by Rev. George T. Ronk, a strong defender of the Ashland viewpoint, entitled "The Antinomian Controversy in the Brethren Church," began appearing in the

¹ Conference Minutes, *Brethren Annual*, 1939, p. 19.

Evangelist in the spring of 1939.² These articles served to show the clear demarcation between the two conflicting groups within the church. According to Mr. Ronk, the Grace Seminary group were Antinomians, whereas the Ashland group were the Pietistic group. He said that the first or Antinomian group were guilty of adherence to a fanatical Calvinism with its teachings of eternal security; that they discounted the value of the Sermon on the Mount for present-day Christian living, as well as other portions of the New Testament (hence the name Antinomian); and that they had departed from historic Brethrenism with its emphasis upon "piety, integrity, humility, simplicity, and non-violence."³ On the other hand, he said, the Pietistic or Ashland group were unalterably opposed to these "innovations" and truly stood for the faith of Alexander Mack.

According to Mr. Ronk, on the side of the latter group stands "the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, Ashland College, the control of the General Conference, and all the district conferences except two. This is the historic Brethren Pietistic group. On the other side stands the control of the Foreign Board, Grace Theological Seminary, the large and powerful district conference of Southern California and the small district conference of the Northwest, and many congregations scattered through the other districts. This is the innovating Calvinistic Antinomian group. Between them the members of the church must take their choice."⁴

These writings of Mr. Ronk quickly called forth answers by the Grace Seminary group endeavoring to show the inaccuracies, falsities, and unbrotherliness manifest in these writings and refuting the false charges, denying in particular the charge of Antinomianism. An answer of particular vigor written by President Alva J. McClain appeared in the May 20, 1939, issue of the *Evangelist*. It was entitled, "Brother Ronk's Antinomian Antimony," and denounced emphatically the charges of Anti-

² This series began appearing in the issue of April 15, 1939.

³ George T. Ronk, "The Antinomian Controversy in the Brethren Church," *Brethren Evangelist*, April 15, 1939, p. 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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nomianism which had been leveled at the Grace Seminary group.⁵

Thus the conflict continued to rage. The lines were becoming constantly more tightly drawn. During the summer of 1939 a definite effort was put forth to formulate a peace committee composed of representatives from both sides of the controversy which would sit down together to see if a solution to the denominational difficulties could be found. The editor of the *Evangelist* took the lead in this effort. He wrote to five men who were known to be prominent on each side of the controversy, proposing such a committee. The lack of cooperation in the venture on the part of the Ashland College group had the result that no peace committee ever came together, as Editor Mayes had proposed.⁶

As the summer of 1939 wore on and the General Conference approached, many felt that the situation was so serious that unless God undertook in a definite way division in the denomination was certain. In order to avert this, some from the Grace Seminary side of the controversy conceived the idea of calling a special prayer meeting of all the ministers in The Brethren Church to be held immediately before the convening of the General Conference of 1939. Thus a call appeared in the August 5 issue of the *Evangelist* urging "all the preachers" of The Brethren Church to a meeting to be held at Winona Lake, Friday, August 25, at 10 a.m. The meeting was to be held in the chapel of the Inn where meetings of the National Ministerium used to be held. The effort was sincere on the part of those who were responsible for urging the prayer meeting, but doubtless because it was conceived by those on the Grace Seminary side of the controversy, only those of that viewpoint attended, with a few exceptions. Did this mean that the spirit of prayer had departed from the church? The situation looked ominous when in face of impending tragedy, Brethren could not come together to intercede at the throne of God.

⁵ Alva J. McClain, "Brother Ronk's Antinomian Antimony," *Brethren Evangelist*, May 20, 1939, p. 15.

⁶ See the *Brethren Evangelist*, June 17, 1939, p. 14f.

Sensing the seriousness of the situation, especially in relation to the forthcoming General Conference of August 28-Sept. 3, 1939, the California District Conference, assembled July 8-17, of the same year, at the First Brethren Church of Long Beach, unanimously passed a series of resolutions setting forth what they felt would be the proper attitude to take in the General Conference. The Southern California District Conference was alarmed at the actions of at least three district conferences in the Brotherhood which had "refused to recognize delegates from churches whose loyalty to the time-honored doctrines and practices of The Brethren Church were never questioned before the dictatorial policies of the officialdom of Ashland College became an issue."⁷

This conference was appalled at the fact that the Indiana, the Ohio, and the Southeastern district conferences had made loyalty to established boards and institutions of The Brethren Church, Ashland College in particular, the basis for the seating of delegates to their conferences in contrast to all previous practice. Its indignation was aroused to white heat at the fact that one of the three above-named conferences; namely, Indiana, had passed resolutions "to the effect that it expects to protest and challenge the right of any church to representation in any district conference or at our General Conference to be held at Winona Lake, Indiana, Aug. 28 to Sept. 3, 1939, if they have taken any action separating themselves from the established boards or institutions of The Brethren Church."⁸

In its resolutions, the Southern California District asserted that such procedures were in definite violation of the constitution under which the General Conference of the Brethren Church has operated from its beginning. Quoting from said constitution, it showed that the membership of the General Conference has always been determined by the local churches which provide properly certified credentials to those of their own choice and not by any self-authorized committee or group within the conference itself. The resolutions urged that all the

⁷ *Ibid.*, Aug. 5, 1939, p. 34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

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local churches in the Brotherhood make every possible effort to send to the forthcoming General Conference delegates who would truly represent their churches and not "merely the representatives of an educational institution set to control the church and all its auxiliaries." It was the feeling of this district that if the General Conference was truly representative, it would not be controlled by any institution or group within the church.

The idea of the Southern California District was a good one and thoroughly in accord with age-long Brethren ideals of congregational church government. However, it had not taken into account a clever maneuver of the opposition whereby a large number of these carefully chosen delegates would not be seated in the General Conference.

The maneuver worked in the following manner. The Membership Committee was in the control of the Ashland group by the margin of one vote. Doubtless by careful prearrangement on the part of the majority group of the committee, over eighty credentials which were presented by delegates from churches supporting Grace Seminary were rejected.

Such prominent churches, with their pastors, as the First Brethren Church, Dayton, Ohio, R. D. Barnard, pastor; Fort Wayne, Indiana, Leo Polman, pastor; Uniontown, Pennsylvania, William Clough, pastor; Winchester, Virginia, Norman Uphouse, pastor; Akron, Ohio, Raymond Gingrich, pastor; Rittman, Ohio, L. L. Grubb, pastor; and Ankenytown, Ohio, Arnold Kriegbaum, pastor, were put under the ban and their delegates rejected. The reason given was that these churches were out of fellowship with their districts. The real reason was that they looked with favor upon Grace Seminary.

There seems to have been little consistency in the plan, however, because some of the most prominent Grace Seminary supporters, such as President McClain and Dr. L. S. Bauman, and most of the members of the board of trustees, were accepted, while some of the delegates which were rejected had taken only minor parts in the controversy. However that may be, the rejection of such a substantial number of delegates meant that the General Conference was to be controlled by the

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Ashland College group. Dr. McClain, in commenting upon the above action as it affected the Grace Seminary group, has said:

Somewhat appalled by the brazen character of these tactics, and convinced that the entire action was an illegal violation of the Conference rules, the supporters of Grace Seminary (now held to a fixed minority) refused to vote upon any motion throughout the Conference. Other delegates, noting the situation, did not even bother to present their credentials.⁹

The expelled delegates and their sympathizers did not leave the conference, though it was futile for them to try to accomplish anything. Following the regular evening sessions of the conference, they began meeting across the street in the Christian Temple, now called the Rodeheaver Music Hall. The enthusiasm of those meetings will not soon be forgotten by the several hundreds that crowded the Temple at all of these gatherings. At these meetings there was organized the National Brethren Bible Conference, out of which has developed the present situation in the Grace group of churches with its National Fellowship of Brethren Churches to distinguish it from the General Conference of the Brethren Church which continued to be under the control of the Ashland group of churches. The National Fellowship of Brethren Churches has continued regularly to hold its national conferences at Winona Lake, Indiana, with two exceptions: in 1950 and 1955, they were held in Long Beach, California, and in Portland, Oregon, respectively. The Ashland group since 1939 has held its national gatherings in Ashland, Ohio.

The memorable conference of 1939 brought to a consummation a struggle that had been molesting the peace of the church for years. It was now evident that there were to be two groups within The Brethren Church. Like Barnabas and Paul, these two groups could not see eye to eye, and it seemed best that they go their separate ways. The resolutions which were passed at the conclusion of the 1939 conference reflect the irreconcilable situation that prevailed.

⁹A. J. McClain, "The Background and Origin of Grace Theological Seminary," *Charis* (Grace Theological Seminary year book), 1951, p. 35.

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The resolutions committee which had been appointed by the Ashland-controlled conference presented a set of resolutions upholding the actions of the Conference Membership Committee in denying seats in the conference to those more than eighty delegates who professed loyalty to Grace Seminary and the Brethren Home Missions Council. This committee justified in every major matter the organization and procedure of the conference with its conduct by the retiring moderator, Melvin A. Stuckey, and the moderator-elect, Claud Studebaker. Furthermore, it recognized Ashland College and Seminary as *the* educational institution of The Brethren Church and expressed the thought "that it is our opinion that the maintenance of this institution is vital to the future growth and spiritual life of our denomination."¹⁰

Prior to its adoption, a substitute set of resolutions was presented by Frank Coleman, Jr., which set forth the viewpoint of the Grace Seminary constituency. It denied "the legality and the binding force of any action taken at this conference because of the irregular, illegal and willful actions of its opening session."¹¹ These resolutions, of course, were lost by reason of the constitution of the conference. But they at least received a hearing and a permanent place in the conference minutes.

When the delegates and others left the General Conference of 1939, it was realized that there was a division in The Brethren Church which was established. In a sense there was a feeling of relief, realizing that, to a degree at least, there would be a cessation of strife. But in the hearts of many there was a deep sadness because of difficulties that must be faced in many of the home churches. A period of testing lay immediately ahead. Then, too, there were wounds between relatives and friends that would be long in healing. Thus the delegates left that memorable conference with mingled emotions, not certain as to what the future would bring. One blessed assurance, however, sustained them. The Lord Jesus Christ controls the future.

¹⁰ Conference Minutes, *Brethren Annual*, 1940, p. 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

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In summarizing the situation that resulted in the division just described, it may be well to ask the question, just what was it that divided The Brethren Church? Is it possible to pinpoint the matter to such an extent that definiteness may be affirmed? Dr. Louis S. Bauman wrote a rather extended article on this subject which appeared in *The Brethren Evangelist* of September 2, 1939. In that article entitled "What Has Divided The Brethren Church?" Dr. Bauman dealt with the question first from a negative viewpoint, endeavoring to set aside some of the factors which entered into the conflict, such as disagreement as to the applicability of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount to the present dispensation, opposing views on the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer, legalism, Antinomianism, "historic Brethrenism," and disloyalty to the institutions of The Brethren Church.

After giving careful reasons why these were not the responsible causes for the division in the ranks of the Brethren, Dr. Bauman then proceeded to give several causes for the division. At the head of the list he placed *Modernism* in Ashland College and sought to justify his contention. Second in his list was the matter of *Freemasonry*, which he contended had been embraced by some of the leaders associated with Ashland College and which has always been vigorously opposed by The Brethren Church because of its oath-bound character. Next he named *personal animosities* as a definite contributing cause for the division.

Doubtless each one of these things mentioned by Dr. Bauman, and others, such as departure from the policy of congregational church government, were factors in the division of the church; but primarily, as Dr. McClain emphasizes, the fundamental issue at Ashland College from whence the conflict emerged was "the age-long issue of the Christian faith."¹² All other issues stemmed from this basic problem, though it may be denied by Ashland representatives. There is a marked difference in belief between the two groups. Outwardly the difference is sometimes

¹² A. J. McClain, "Why a New Seminary?" Pamphlet distributed by the Brethren Biblical Seminary Association, 1937.

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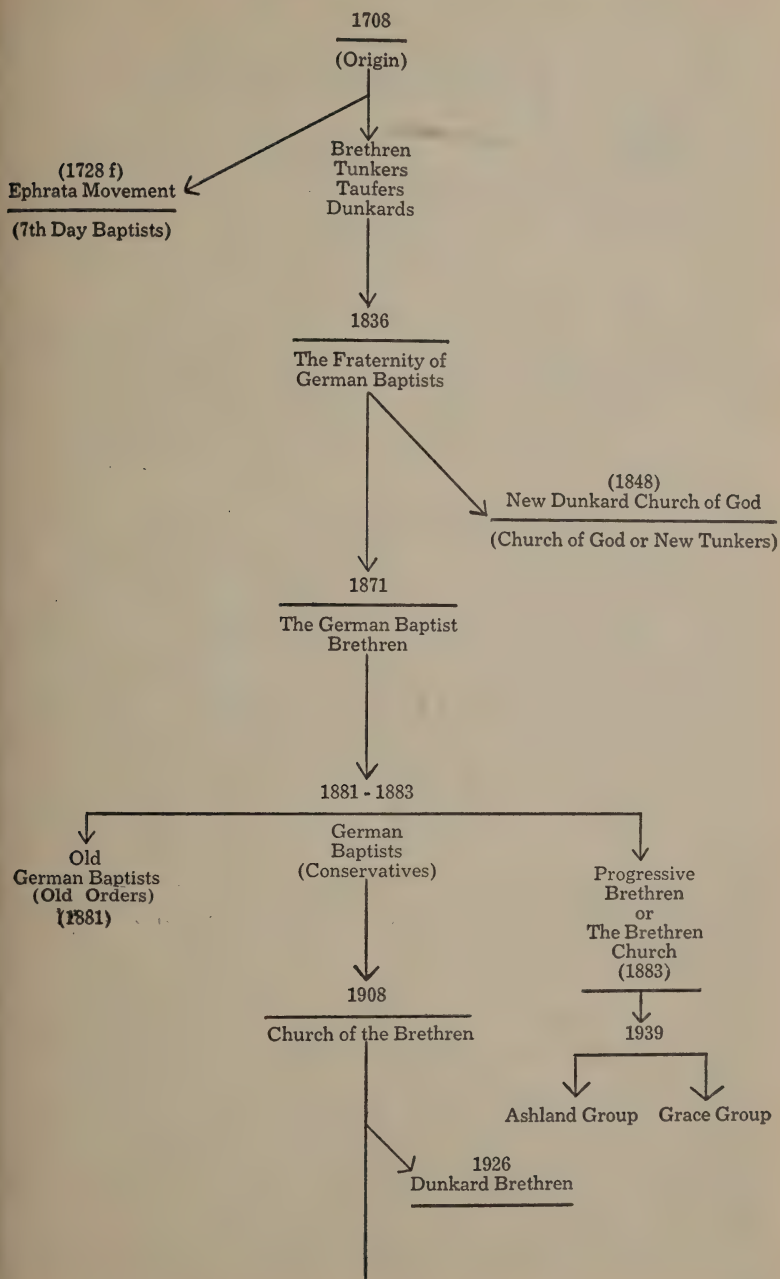
not evident. Both groups observe the same forms and ceremonies, but underneath there is a difference in attitude toward the grace of God and all of its implications. What has just been said relates to the two groups in general, not necessarily to individuals and churches within these groups which may not be in full agreement with the group to which they belong. The writer is confident that in the Ashland group there are many individuals and some churches which do not subscribe to the beliefs of their leaders.

And now that we have traced the Brethren movement through its various vicissitudes from the time of its origin unto the situation as it presently exists, the writer wishes to insert on the following page a chart setting forth the main outline of the Tunker development. Some very minor divisions have been omitted. The chart includes the names and dates of the various phases of the development and their relationship one to another.

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TUNKER FRATERNITY CHART



15

• *The Present Situation*
• *in The Brethren Church*
• *(1940-1958)*
•

We have seen how two distinct groups developed within The Brethren Church, bringing about a climactic culmination at the General Conference of 1939 at Winona Lake. We wish now to consider the situation which has existed from that time to the present.

Contrary to the opinion which seems to be held by many, no new denomination came into being in connection with the controversy. There is no such thing as a Grace Brethren denomination, though many individual churches among the Grace group are designated Grace Brethren. There has been no official severance of the Ashland and Grace groups denominationally. Both groups claim to be The Brethren Church. Both groups have claimed that the other has departed from true Brethrenism. The Grace group has pointed out that the Ashland group has departed from "historic Brethrenism" in its violations of the principle of church government, in its willingness to appeal to the civil courts of the land to uphold its position, and in its tendency toward legalism and unorthodox teaching in its one educational institution.

On the other hand, the Ashland group has claimed that the Grace group has departed from "historic Brethrenism" because of the so-called innovations it brought into the church and its refusal longer to support some of the institutions of the church, particularly Ashland College and Seminary. In certain quarters the Ashland group went so far as to seek to read the Grace group out of The Brethren Church altogether. For instance, at the Indiana District Conference, held at Shipshewanna in

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June, 1940, the following drastic resolution was passed:

Be it resolved by this Conference, the District Conference of the Brethren Church: That all churches, ministers, and laymen who have identified themselves with and are supporters of seceding conferences, boards and institutions, namely, Grace Theological Seminary, the Home Missions Council, the Women's Missionary Council, the Brethren Missionary Herald, the National Bible Conference and any other seceding organization are no longer members of this Conference, neither do we consider such as members of the Brethren Church.

That we do not consider they are eligible to membership in this Conference, or to membership in the Brethren Church, unless and until they withdraw from the above named seceding organizations and declare their loyalty and support to the regularly constituted and recognized institutions, boards, and conferences of the Brethren Church.¹

But regardless of this attitude on the part of some of the members of the Ashland College group, the Grace Seminary group has continued to consider themselves Brethren. No legal action has as yet been taken to determine which group has the right to the name Brethren. Whether such an appeal to the courts will ever be made, only the future will reveal. However that may be, both groups continue to designate themselves by the name of The Brethren Church. Officially, then, the Ashland and Grace groups are one denomination; practically, they are two, since there is a definite separation in doctrine, work, officary, boards, schools, publishing houses, and organizations.

This separation is definitely reflected in the matter of the annual conferences held by the two groups. Beginning in 1940 the Ashland group began regularly to hold its annual meeting at Ashland, Ohio, whereas the Grace group continued to meet in Winona Lake, Indiana, except on special occasions when it decides to meet elsewhere.

An agreement was reached between the two groups during the 1940 conference week whereby confusion of name in our general conferences would be avoided in the future. It was decided that the Ashland group would continue its national conference work under the title "The General or National Conference of the Brethren Church," and that the supporters of the

¹ *Brethren Evangelist*, June 22, 1940, p. 13.

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Grace Seminary group would continue its work under the name "The National Fellowship of Brethren Churches."² The latter group, in making this change of name, acted within the legal right of any organization to change its name. Hence, the conference of August 26 to September 2, 1940, of the Grace Seminary group, which was announced as the Second Annual National Brethren Bible Conference, was really the 51st Annual Conference of "The National Fellowship of Brethren Churches." It would have been the 52nd such conference but for the contention of the Grace Brethren that the 1939 conference was not legally organized under the rules of the Manual of Procedure.

The annual meetings of the two groups, of course, are conducted with no connection the one with the other, though they meet at approximately the same time each year.

What is true with respect to the annual meetings of the two groups is also true of the various district conferences across the land. Each group conducts its own conferences and maintains its own work. This fact has had no small part in solidifying the separation between the two groups. The district conferences usually meet in the spring or summer of each year prior to the national conference in order that recommendations may be presented to the larger gathering.

In all of their conferences, both national and district, the Grace group of churches has been most careful to maintain the congregational principle of church government. It recognizes the sovereignty of the local church. Conference actions, therefore, are not mandatory; they are advisory. These conferences provide an opportunity for fellowship and for a working together on projects of mutual interest to all the churches. Though there is the recognition of the independence of the local church, yet there is also a recognition of the need of the individual churches to work and council together as they did in New Testament times. To this end the conferences of our Brotherhood serve an important purpose. Without them united effort would be limited to a tremendous degree.

² *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Sept. 7, 1940, p. 3.

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There is likewise a sharp distinction in the missionary interests of the two groups. The Grace group of churches supports the Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church and the Brethren Home Missions Council, as well as the Women's Missionary Council and the Sisterhood of Mary and Martha; whereas, the Ashland group operates both their home and foreign missionary work under one board. The latter group also has a women's missionary organization called the Women's Missionary Society and a Sisterhood of Mary and Martha.

Considering first the foreign mission work, it should be noted that in connection with the unpleasant denominational difficulties through which the church passed during the years of 1936-1939, practically all of the foreign missionaries and members of the board of trustees accepted the Grace viewpoint in the controversy. Moreover, statistics have shown that the Grace group of churches were the churches providing the major portion of the Society's support.

From the time of the division until the present time the Foreign Missionary Society has continued to expand its ministry so that instead of two fields of operation, Argentina and Africa, the Society now carries on work in six fields—Brazil, Mexico, France, and Hawaii having been added in recent years. The extent of its growth is reflected to some extent in the fact that the offering to the Foreign Missionary Society in the year of division (1939) was \$50,818.06, whereas, in 1957 it amounted to \$293,530.99. The number of missionaries at the time of the division was twenty-eight, serving in two fields. Since that time the number has steadily grown until in 1958 it was one hundred, this number serving in the six fields previously mentioned.

A detailed account of the work of foreign missions in our fellowship merits a large volume, or perhaps several volumes, devoted exclusively to this very important aspect of our denominational life. Dr. Orville D. Jobson (b. 1900), superintendent of the Brethren mission in French Equatorial Africa, in his Bauman Memorial Lectures for 1957, delivered at Grace Theological Seminary and College, presented in brilliant fashion

the complete story of the work of the Foreign Missionary Society on our Africa field. These lectures have been put in book form under the title, *Conquering Oubangui-Chari for Christ*. It is to be hoped that in the future our other fields will receive like careful treatment. Dr. Charles F. Yoder wrote a book entitled, *The Argentine Mission Field*, but since this work was completed in 1930, its information is by no means complete.

This present volume undertakes only in sketchy outline to set forth the general character and progress of our foreign work in the several fields of activity. Only a few of the missionary personnel can be dealt with in this work.

As previously noted in chapter ten, the Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church was born on September 4, 1900, and its first permanent work was opened in *Argentina* in 1909 under the leadership of Charles Francis Yoder (following unsuccessful attempts in Montreal, Canada, and Persia). Dr. Yoder was recognized as a man of more than usual ability as a pastor, teacher, and author. He possessed a keen interest in the cause of foreign missions. Thus he was the logical choice of the Foreign Missionary Society to pioneer in their missionary efforts. After an unsuccessful attempt in 1903 to enter Persia to survey it as a possible field of endeavor, Dr. Yoder advised against seeking to establish a mission in that field and recommended instead South America as a more likely field, and thus in 1907 "the Argentine Republic and neighboring states of South America" were selected as the "special field of our missionary effort." At the same time Charles Yoder and his wife, Pearl, were called by the executive committee of the Foreign Missionary Society as the pioneer missionaries of The Brethren Church to Argentina. (See Handbook of Missionary Facts, 1942, p. 11.) As a preparation for missionary service in Argentina, Dr. Yoder was sent to Montreal, Canada, in 1908, to minister for one year among the Roman Catholics of that area. In 1902 and 1903 the Foreign Missionary Society had laid the groundwork for a mission in this place.

It was in 1909 that Dr. and Mrs. Yoder and Miss Bertha May Bell actually set sail for Argentina, where a Brethren

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mission was soon established which has continued unto the present time. It is located in north central Argentina with Rio Cuarto as the headquarters.

Dr. Yoder served the Foreign Missionary Society for thirty years on the Argentine field, at the end of which time in 1938 he was retired and Elder Clarence L. Sickel was vested with the responsibility of leadership. The latter was actually appointed field superintendent in 1934, which office he filled with distinction and Christian grace until about three years before his death on December 10, 1951. Failing health made it unwise for him to continue this responsibility following his return to the field after his last furlough. Dr. Sickel was a missionary statesman of the finest type.

With respect to Dr. Yoder it should be said that at the time of the Ashland-Grace controversy of 1936-39, he chose to cast his lot with the Ashland side of the denominational controversy and returned to missionary service under the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. He labored in the province of Cordoba until the time of his death on February 7, 1955, devoting most of his time in his later years to writing and counseling.

The work in Argentina from the beginning has been extremely difficult because of the Roman Catholic opposition. The growth has been slow. At the present time the work looks more promising than at any time, with the native constituency taking upon itself more and more of the leadership and responsibility in the church. There is a membership of 369 (1956) in the Argentine church.

The progress of the Brethren work in Argentina can never be understood apart from the self-sacrificing efforts of other missionaries like those already mentioned who have given many years of service in this land beneath the southern cross. Among these are Rev. and Mrs. Hill Maconaghy, Mrs. Clarence Sickel, the widow of the esteemed leader referred to in a previous paragraph, Miss Johanna Nielsen, Rev. and Mrs. J. Paul Dowdy, Rev. and Mrs. Ricardo Wagner, Rev. and Mrs. Lynn D. Schrock, Rev. and Mrs. Solon W. Hoyt, and Rev. and Mrs. Jack B. Churchill.

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Brethren foreign mission work was opened in *French Equatorial Africa* in 1921 under the leadership of James S. Gribble (1883-1923), after having been approved by General Conference in 1917. The reader is urged to consult Dr. Orville D. Jobson's monumental work above mentioned for a detailed story of the opening and progress of this work.

It is largely due to the vision and faith of James Gribble that The Brethren Church has a strong work in Africa today. Born near Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1883, and converted in 1904 in the First Brethren Church, of Philadelphia, under the pastorate of Louis S. Bauman, Gribble showed the reality of his Christian experience immediately following his conversion by becoming a candidate for the mission field.

Since The Brethren Church did not have a work in Africa to which he felt definitely called, he contacted the Africa Inland Mission and its director Rev. Charles E. Hurlburt with respect to service in Africa. The result was that Gribble went forth under that mission in 1908.

While serving at the Kijabe Mission Station he received much valuable experience as a pioneer missionary, since the work at this place was but seven years old. While laboring tirelessly at this location, his vision carried him to the regions beyond where as yet no missionary had taken the Gospel and hoped that some day under the direction of his own denomination he might be instrumental in opening up a new work in virgin territory. It was while in this term of service for the Africa Inland Mission that James Gribble met Dr. Florence Newberry (1880-1942), a medical doctor who was laboring under the same board as Gribble. A romance developed which resulted after a persistent courtship in their marriage in the fifth year of their term of service.

James and Florence Gribble together were the instruments in God's hands for opening a great field of missionary endeavor in the heart of Africa. They possessed an unswerving faith in God and an undying love for the souls of the dark-skinned people of that continent which are imperative assets for successful missionary endeavor.

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The attention of the board of trustees of The Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church was first attracted to the Gribbles and their work in 1914 when they were already in Africa working for the Africa Inland Mission. The board was favorably impressed. Then in 1915 the board passed a resolution approving Mr. and Mrs. Gribble and Miss Estella Myers (1884-1956) for work in Africa, with the understanding that "they are undertaking this work in the faith that the Lord will supply all their needs, asking no salaries or any guarantee from this board." Thus far the Africa project was mostly on a trial basis.

But by 1917 through the itineration of James and Florence Gribble among the churches in America, the imagination of the constituency of The Brethren Church had been captured so that French Equatorial Africa was approved by the society as a missionary field, and at the same time the Gribbles, Miss Estella Myers, and Miss Mae Snyder were approved as missionaries to this field.

Pursuant to this the missionaries above mentioned sailed on January 7, 1918, from New Orleans for Africa on the S.S. *City of Cairo*. A new day had dawned for the cause of missions in The Brethren Church. But there were trying times ahead for the first missionary party. Through governmental restrictions the party was forbidden to enter the field of their choice until 1921. The three long years of waiting at Brazzaville, near the mouth of the Congo, proved the metal of these heroic pioneers. They refused to be discouraged and at last their faith was rewarded.

Brethren in the homeland will never forget the cablegram that James Gribble sent to America when official permission finally came from the French government to enter the land that God surely had laid upon their hearts. It deserves repetition here: "*Brethren, Ashland, Ohio, Etats, Unis. Permission Granted. Hallelujah. Locating Further Inland. Psalms 66 and 126. Gribble.*" This was under date of September 23, 1921.

Soon the first mission station in Oubangui-Chari, French Equatorial Africa, was opened at Bassai Mountain. From this

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point there has been steady expansion. Space forbids me to recount the exploits of God's servants as they have poured out their lives for the lost in Africa—such folks as the Orville D. Jobsons, the John Hathaways, the Lester Kennedys, the Floyd Tabers, the Chauncey Sheldons, the Jacob Klievers, and Miss Elizabeth Tyson, to mention just a few who have had special leadership responsibilities.

Since 1921 a remarkable work has been established in the heart of Africa. So responsive to the Gospel have the Africans been that The Brethren Church in Africa is fast approaching the size of the church in America. It numbers at present well over eighteen thousand and it is fast becoming a strong indigenous body. As of 1955 this number included 13,160 baptized believers and 5,618 members of converts' classes. The Foreign Missionary Society now has fifty-seven missionaries serving in this field.

Brazil was entered as a mission field in 1949 with Rev. and Mrs. J. Keith Altig doing the pioneer work. The Altigs had been successful in the pastorate in the United States but were of the deep conviction that the Lord had called them to the foreign field and to the task of pioneering a new work. The board of The Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church had been looking about for another field of endeavor. It wanted as far as possible a field that was unevangelized. Providentially, it seemed, the board and the Altigs came together in consideration of Brazil. Here was a sleeping giant that was beginning to awaken, industrially at least. Would it awaken to the preaching of the Gospel? It presented a great challenge.

At its annual meeting in August of 1948 the board decided to send a missionary party into the province of Amapa and adjacent territory near the mouth of the Amazon River in Brazil to make necessary investigation looking toward the establishment of a permanent work somewhere in that area. At the same meeting the Altigs were approved as the party to make the investigation. Consequently, Mr. and Mrs. Altig with their three children sailed for Brazil on March 2, 1949. Following

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over nine months of groundwork on the field, the first public services were held at Icoraci on April 1, 1950. Almost at the outset there were gratifying results in the presentation of the Gospel.

The need for a supporting couple to aid in establishing this work was soon recognized. As an answer to this need the Rev. and Mrs. Edward D. Miller were approved for work in Brazil and departed thence on the S.S. *Sheridan* on February 18, 1950. Since that time two other couples, the Rev. and Mrs. John W. Zielasko and the Rev. and Mrs. Bill A. Burk, have been sent to the field to greatly strengthen this new work and make possible the establishment of three stations in our Brazilian enterprise. These Portuguese-speaking people have shown a heartening receptivity to the Gospel, which makes the future of this work appear encouraging.

Baja (Lower) California first came to the attention of the board of The Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church as a definite field of missionary effort through Rev. Jack Green, of the First Brethren Church of Los Angeles and a graduate of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. The latter had experienced some firsthand contacts with the people of this neglected area. For a number of years prior to 1948 he had been working among a group of Russian young people of the Molokan sect in Los Angeles. It was through these people that Jack Green became acquainted with other Russian people who lived in Baja California. It was an easy step then for Brother Green, as he visited the Russians in this part of Mexico, to become interested in many Mexican families who were neighbors of the Molokans.

The result was that he communicated to The Brethren Church many interesting and challenging things about these people and their spiritual need. He was consequently approved in 1948 for work in this land under the sponsorship and support of The Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church. It was planned for him to begin work on January 1, 1949, but serious illness prevented and to the present time he has not served as a missionary on this field.

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However, God provided others to undertake this ministry. Rev. and Mrs. Walter Haag, who had previously done missionary work in Spanish-speaking Puerto Rico before coming to Winona Lake (where Brother Haag took the full course in Grace Seminary), offered themselves for work in this field. Rev. and Mrs. Leroy Howard also offered themselves for this work following Mr. Howard's graduation from the seminary. Following a trip of investigation into the interior of Baja California in the summer of 1951 by the male members of this pioneer party, the work was opened in November of that year, with headquarters established at San Ysidro, California, on the Mexican border near Tijuana, Mexico.

The goal at that time was the evangelization only of the Baja California peninsula. Since then there has been a decision by the foreign-mission board to expand its efforts to include other areas in Mexico. Because of governmental restrictions practically all of the work up to the present time has been conducted from three points on the United States side of the border; San Ysidro and Calexico, California, and Laredo, Texas. The aim of our mission to Mexico is to get into the interior as soon as possible, even though at present it must be on the turista (tourist) basis, which means that missionaries cannot remain in the field more than six months, at the end of which time they must return to the United States and have their tourist permit renewed. In harmony with the plan of entering the interior as soon as practicable, Rev. and Mrs. Sibley Edmiston and their family left Laredo, Texas, in the spring of 1957 to establish themselves in Leon, Mexico, which is located about seven hundred miles south of the border from Laredo. The Edmistons had been laboring in Laredo since the summer of 1953 and left the work there in charge of two Mexican believers.

Seven missionaries presently are connected with this new work including Miss Dorothy M. Robinson who joined the work soon after graduating from Grace Seminary in May 1953. The latter had already made a distinct contribution to the cause of missions by her thesis on "The Indigenous Church" written

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as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the seminary with the Master of Religious Education Degree. Results in Mexico have been meager but they are encouraging in view of the hindrances.

France was opened as a Brethren mission field in the fall of 1951. After several years of consideration the Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church approved this field, feeling that France has been neglected as far as the Gospel is concerned and that since most of our missionaries to Africa spend some time in France in language study, they could give some help to mission work there during this period. At the annual meeting of the Society in August of 1947, France had been approved as a prospective mission field, but at that time there were no volunteers to pioneer the work. Then in the latter part of 1949, Rev. and Mrs. P. Fredrick Fogle, originally of Washington, D.C., contacted the board, offering their services to this country. At the time, Mr. Fogle was pastor of the First Brethren church, of Ankenytown, Ohio. But the Lord had laid a heavy burden upon the hearts of both Brother and Sister Fogle for a testimony in France and they felt they must go even though they were having a successful ministry in the homeland. Thus they seemed to be the answer to the need for a couple to open the mission in that field. They were approved by the board of the Foreign Missionary Society at its February meeting in 1951. The recommendation was acted upon favorably by the Society in August of that year, and in November the Fogle family was on its way to France.

After a period of study in Paris they went to Lyon, the third city in size and one of the most neglected cities in France as regards the Gospel. The board after careful investigation, had decided that this city in southeast France should be the place to establish the first permanent Brethren testimony. During these early days of this mission much time and effort have been expended in studying the field and endeavoring to determine the best methods of procedure. A poster ministry has yielded some results. Public meetings have been held in Lyon and vicinity. Many homes have been entered in visitation. Lots

have been purchased looking toward the erection of a missionary residence which will give stability to the testimony.

With such groundwork having been done, it is expected that greater progress will be witnessed in the future. So far (1958) the Fogles are the only Brethren workers who have been sent to this new field, except that they have been aided in a limited way by missionaries on their way to Africa who have stopped in France for a period of language study.

Hawaii is the youngest of the projects undertaken by The Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church. It really got under way officially in May of 1953 with the arrival of Rev. and Mrs. Foster Tresise in Honolulu. Before accepting the call of the Lord to undertake this new missionary work, Brother Tresise was pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Fillmore, California. Mrs. Tresise is a graduate nurse.

About a year prior to the coming of the Tresises to Honolulu the attention of the Brethren was called to this opportunity by Technical Sergeant and Mrs. Edwin J. Jones, who had come to know the Lord through the ministry of the Seal Beach (Calif.) Brethren Church. These servants of the Lord gathered people together for Bible study and prayer, and ere long they had a Sunday school in operation and regular church services were held. Conversions and baptisms were experienced in encouraging numbers. Here appeared to be another door of challenging opportunity.

The Joneses realized that soon their military responsibilities would remove them from Hawaii, and so they appealed to Brethren in the United States to do something for the future of this work. The Foreign Missionary Society lent a listening ear to the appeal and ere long approved the offer of Brother and Sister Tresise to go to Honolulu on a self-supporting basis. Because of its other commitments the Society was unable to do more than help in the way of transportation and limited operational expense.

On May 8, 1953, they flew from Los Angeles to Honolulu. A few months later the United States Army transferred Jones

to another responsibility, which left the Tresises with the full leadership of this new work. God blessed their efforts with confessions of faith, baptisms, and an encouraging attendance at the regular services of the church.

This work has been carefully organized and has been self-supporting from the very beginning. At its midyear meeting in 1957 the board of the Foreign Missionary Society took action placing "the Hawaii missionary work on a full-time basis for a trial period of one year" in order that the possibilities in this field might be more fully explored. Following a trip of investigation to this field by two members of the board, Dr. R. D. Barnard, the general secretary, and Dr. Glenn O'Neal, in July 1957, it was arranged that this full-time basis would become operative on August 1 of that summer. There is also a definite possibility that the work may be relocated in a more advantageous area or extended to include other areas. From the beginning it has been located eight or ten miles from downtown Honolulu in the "Red Hill" district, a military station.

For over twenty-five years the activities of the Foreign Missionary Society were directed from a suite of rooms in the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California, of which church Dr. L. S. Bauman was pastor. He also acted as secretary-treasurer of the Foreign Missionary Society during most of those years. In 1946 the office of secretary-treasurer was divided, at which time Russell D. Barnard became the full-time general secretary, Dr. Bauman retaining his position as treasurer. In 1948 the office of the general secretary was moved to Winona Lake and by 1951, following Dr. Bauman's death, all the administrative functions of the Society had become consolidated in Winona Lake.

Due in large measure to the enthusiastic and wise leadership of Dr. Bauman and Dr. Barnard, the foreign missionary interests of The Brethren Church have witnessed a steady growth in recent years. In June of 1955 Rev. Clyde K. Landrum was added to the administrative staff as assistant to Dr. Barnard, being called from the pastorate of the Uniontown (Pa.) Brethren church. Qualified by experience and training, he already

has added to the efficient direction of the denomination's foreign-mission interests.

This hasty review of the work of foreign missions in the National Fellowship of Brethren Churches since the division of 1936-1939 gives cause for real encouragement. Statistics show that offerings have increased over 500 percent in that time. There has been a threefold increase in the number of fields entered. Also the records show an increase of missionary personnel of considerably over 300 percent. For these facts we thank God and take courage! It appears that the church in a measure at least is catching the vision of world evangelization and is seeking to answer the challenge of the risen Lord.

The headquarters of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, which controls all of the missionary work for the Ashland group, is at Ashland, Ohio.

As indicated previously, the Ashland group has severed all official connection with *The Foreign Missionary Society* of the Brethren Church. However, it is known that certain individuals from the Ashland group contribute to the Society's work. Missionaries of the Society are occasionally invited to speak in their churches. In view of this severance of relationship, the Ashland group placed its foreign missionary work under the control of the *Missionary Board of the Brethren Church*, otherwise known as the National Home Missionary Board. This was a reversion to the plan which was used before 1900 when *The Foreign Missionary Society* of the Brethren Church came into existence. At the Ashland Conference of August 1940, a resolution was passed making the above effective. The resolution read as follows:

Be it further resolved, that the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church be charged with the responsibility of and the carrying on of the Foreign Missionary work of the General Conference and that said Missionary Board of the Brethren Church be continuing our work in South America.³

This resolution was unanimously passed by the Ashland conference assembled at Ashland, Ohio, on Wednesday, August 28, 1940.

³ *The Brethren Evangelist*, Annual Number, Nov. 9, 1940.

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The latter board continued also to operate the work of home missions in the Ashland group.

On account of the denominational difficulties previously discussed, the Grace group of churches organized the Brethren Home Missions Council on September 3, 1938, at Winona Lake, Indiana. At this time its first officers were elected. Then on October 1 of the same year the Council began business operations at Berne, Indiana, later removing to Winona Lake when the denominational rift became a fixed reality. The Council was incorporated on September 2, 1939.

During this time of stress and transition, Rev. R. Paul Miller was the competent leader of the movement, and through his zeal and spiritual vision the work of the Council prospered. Miller's evangelistic fervor became infused into the home-missions program with far-reaching results.

Brother Miller had served successfully since 1929 under the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, as it was then called, before the stirring events of 1936-1939. He had left the pastorate of the First Brethren Church, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and a teaching ministry in the Philadelphia School of the Bible, to become the home-mission secretary of the Brethren Church. He was the successor to Rev. William A. Gearhart, who had been the home-mission secretary from 1921 to 1929. Prior to that, Brother Gearhart had been the general missionary secretary of The Brethren Church (1919-1921), serving both the home- and foreign-mission interests of the church, but in 1921 he discontinued his responsibilities to the foreign-mission board and became the first full-time secretary of the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church.

Let us return to the consideration of the Brethren Home Missions Council. The Council became a separate corporation for the purpose of establishing new churches in our own country. It has also done a notable work in several other neglected areas within the confines of the continental United States of America. Of these we will be writing in several subsequent paragraphs.

As we recount the story of the work of home missions during

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the years since 1939, there is equal room for encouragement as found in the success attending the foreign missionary program.

Space forbids in a work of this nature to tell in detail the thrilling story of the progress of the work which has been supervised by the Brethren Home Missions Council under the direction of Dr. L. L. Grubb, secretary. Church after church has come into existence as testimonies to the Gospel of God's grace. In a remarkably short time many of these churches have become self-supporting and strong contributors to all phases of the denominational work. Not only has the Council been instrumental in the spiritual development of these churches, but it has also taken a vital part in the erection of church buildings, making it possible through its several construction companies and its Brethren Investment Foundation, established in 1955, for these new congregations to have well-built and beautiful places of worship in a short time and at a minimum cost.

It should be added that because of the expansion of the Council's work in recent years, an assistant to the secretary was added to the staff in the person of Rev. Lester E. Pifer, who in 1953 left the pastorate of the Grace Brethren Church, of Fremont, Ohio, to serve the Council. His zeal and his love for the souls of men have added much to the aggressive operation of the latter's work.

The Brethren Home Missions Council, as previously indicated, has sponsored several works apart from building regular churches. It has spread its influence into several neglected areas of America. This work is quite different from the type just described, but just as truly home-mission work.

The work in the mountains of *Kentucky* is the oldest of these enterprises. In days long before the Council came into existence there were some Brethren who possessed a burden for the people in this area and saw here a definite mission field. Here were full-fledged Americans living in the very heart of our country, and most of them had no contact with the Gospel. In 1905 Rev. George E. Drushal with his wife Ada established a small work at Lost Creek, in Breathitt County, which is located in east central Kentucky, southeast of Lexington. The

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nearest town of considerable size is Jackson, the county seat. The Drushals arrived in Jackson on October 13, 1905. The establishment at Lost Creek came to be known as Riverside Institute, well named because of its location on the banks of Troublesome Creek. A Christian day school was operated here. There were a Sunday school and regular church services. The Drushals with their helpers did a good work in this area, and continue to do a good work, for Brother Drushal, though in his eighties, is still carrying on this ministry.

On October 15, 1955, some four hundred former students and teachers of Riverside met in a fitting reunion to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the school. The *Sunday Digest* of August 12, 1956, a David C. Cook publication, has given an interesting account of this occasion along with other facts about Riverside in an article under the caption, "A Light in the Hills." The institution now operates under the official name *Riverside Christian Training School, Inc.* and conducts a Bible school, a four-year high school, and a grade school, besides the regular Sunday worship and teaching services.

Krypton, located across the mountain from Lost Creek, has long been a mission outpost of the latter. A notable work has been done at this place by such persons as the Rev. and Mrs. James Cook, the Rev. and Mrs. Fred Walter, and Rev. and Mrs. Fred Kinzie. Both it and Lost Creek now subscribe to the Ashland viewpoint denominationally.

Following the Ashland-Grace difficulties of 1936-1939, Rev. Sewell S. Landrum, a native of Kentucky, undertook a new work in Clayhole under the direction of the Home Missions Council. This was in October 1939. Prior to this, in 1934, Brother Landrum had become pastor of the Lost Creek congregation, which provided him with the experience he needed to head up this new work. An attractive frame tabernacle has been built at Clayhole, and it has become a lighthouse in that area. School buses transport the people to and from church. A comfortable parsonage is located near the church, which gives stability to the work.

Along with Brother and Mrs. Landrum and their family,

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Elaine Polman Brenneman, Evelyn Fuqua, and Grace Grauel have served as missionaries under the Council in this field.

In September 1950 Miss Evelyn Fuqua, under the direction of the Council, opened a new work at Dryhill which is fifty or sixty miles south of Clayhole. In a most self-sacrificing way Miss Fuqua has labored for the people of this area and has loved a goodly number of them into the kingdom of God. A chapel and a missionary living quarters have been built at this place which are known in all the region round about. There is an enthusiastic Sunday school in operation here. A midweek prayer service is held regularly, and there are preaching services whenever a minister is available. Miss Fuqua also has access to many public schools in this vicinity, even as does Brother Landrum in the Clayhole district. Results in Kentucky have been very gratifying in view of the limited missionary personnel.

Work among the *Spanish-Americans* in New Mexico came to the attention of The Brethren Church largely through the devotion of Rubel V. Lucero for his own people. Brother Lucero was a Spanish-American, born in the New Mexico town of Chacon in 1897. He remained here until he was seventeen years of age, when he joined the army and went overseas. Some time after returning from that service he went to California where he came in contact with some outstanding Bible teachers, not the least of whom was Dr. Louis S. Bauman. These men influenced Brother Lucero greatly and helped to fit him for his future ministry. In 1926 he joined the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California, of which Dr. Bauman was the pastor.

About this same time he acquired a wife, and together they had a burden for the Spanish-Americans of New Mexico. The result was that in 1929 they went to New Mexico to found a mission. They first located at Ranchos de Taos, but later moved to Cañon de Fernandez, the site of the present Brethren church. When this became a Brethren church some years later and additional workers were sent in by the Home Missions Council, Brother Lucero became instrumental in establishing Arroyo

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Hondo as a mission. Then later he went to Albuquerque to build by heart and by hand a Brethren church in that city. Brother Lucero was a good carpenter and did much of the physical labor in connection with each church that has been mentioned.

In the early years of the work among the Spanish-Americans, it was an interdenominational endeavor. It so remained until early in 1946 when in connection with a visit of L. L. Grubb, of the Brethren Home Missions Council, the Cañon Church by a unanimous vote of the congregation became the Taos Brethren Church, the first Spanish-speaking Brethren church north of the Rio Grande. The church was formerly known as the Cañon Faith Mission.

Rev. and Mrs. Mark E. Malles came to direct the work under the Home Missions Council in June of 1946. They were succeeded, after a short term of service, by Rev. and Mrs. Albert Kliever on July 1, 1947. An unfortunate airplane crash took the life of Brother Kliever on November 24, 1948, when it seemed that he was at the threshold of a great ministry in this area. But God raised up another man to carry on the work. Late in 1949 Rev. Samuel Horney, together with his wife Beth, assumed the directorship of this growing mission. A vigorous testimony has been raised up in the vicinity of Taos. Several preaching points have been established with stable converts being observed in each place. Many of these people possess a Roman Catholic background, which makes progress at times difficult, but in spite of this many triumphs for the Gospel have been witnessed during the years of the mission's existence. At the present time (1957) there are four locations in the Spanish-American Missions with pastors and churches. In addition there are outlying points where a gospel testimony is borne.

Work among the *Navaho Indians* of northern New Mexico was undertaken by the Home Missions Council in June of 1947. Miss Dorothy Dunbar, trained in the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and a member of the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California, was the one responsible for pioneering this new work. For some time prior to this Miss Dunbar had had

a great burden for these Indians who were wandering over sixteen million acres of land in New Mexico and Arizona. The United States government had provided this as their reservation. The Navahos number about sixty-six thousand, being the largest tribe of Indians in the United States of America. They live in spiritual night, and this fact challenged Miss Dunbar to do something definite for their evangelization.

Then as early as 1945 Dr. L. L. Grubb visited the Navaho reservation under the direction of Miss Mildred Kuntz, missionary to the Navahos for the Good News Mission. She was a member of the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California, and as a consequence was interested in the attitude of the Brethren toward Indian mission work. Dr. Grubb became convinced at this time that the Brethren ought to be doing something for these Indians who provide a "foreign mission" field in the homeland.

With a car and a trailer in which to live, Dorothy Dunbar began work among the Navahos in the middle of 1947 under the direction of the Home Missions Council. Progress was slow, but little by little through gospel records and an interpreter whom God raised up the Navahos were told the story of salvation. In 1949, on the location which God had provided at Counselor's Post, New Mexico, the first building was started as the result of a Minute Man appeal. It should also be said that from the very beginning of this work the Women's Missionary Council has had much to do with providing the necessary equipment for the work.

Because of ill health Miss Dunbar was forced to resign her position in the mission early in 1951. But God had raised up Mr. and Mrs. Ray Martindale to superintend the work. Miss Lillian Deshnod, a converted and highly intelligent Indian, continued to act as the official interpreter for the work. Miss Angie Garber came to pioneer in the ministry of teaching Indian children when a school was opened in the fall of 1951.

Rev. and Mrs. Evan Adams came upon the field to superintend the work in 1952, following the graduation of Brother Adams from the seminary with high honors. Under the vigor-

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ous direction of the Adams the work has continued to expand. One of the most promising phases of the enterprise is the school for the children which now operates in a new building which was erected in 1953. Trophies of God's grace are being witnessed as the good news of the Gospel is being brought to the Indians of Navaholand.

There are eight missionaries on the staff at Counselor's Post at the present time (1957).

Work among the *Jews* in the Fairfax district of west Los Angeles, California, was undertaken by the Home Missions Council in December of 1949. Brethren people for a long time had been hoping for the time when their denomination would have a work of its own dedicated to Jewish evangelism. Many of our churches had been supporting organizations outside of the Brethren denomination which were doing a good work in seeking the salvation of God's people, Israel. But until the date above mentioned there was no Brethren organization devoted to this task.

Finally, God raised up a man within The Brethren Church who had a passion for the evangelization of the Jewish people. Rev. Bruce L. Button, who was converted through the ministry of the Kittanning (Pa.) Brethren church, came to the conviction soon after his conversion that if the Lord called him into His service, he would like to serve among the Jews. Mr. Button consulted with several Brethren elders about this matter, and finally made his decision at Victory Circle at Camp Bethany in Winona Lake, Indiana. His life was dedicated to Jewish evangelism.

He went to Grace Seminary and graduated in the class of 1949. He then spent some months in definite preparation for Jewish work in Hebrew centers of population. His wife, Leanore, took some training at Grace Seminary and was wholeheartedly in sympathy with the ministry to which her husband had dedicated himself.

Mr. and Mrs. Button with their three children arrived in Los Angeles on December 15, 1949, to establish the Brethren Messianic Witness. In a few days after their arrival they moved

into the property which had been purchased by the Home Missions Council and which has been the headquarters of this venture until the present time. It is an ideal location, being accessible to approximately seventy-five thousand Jews who live in the area. The address is 469 North Kings Road, Los Angeles 48, California. The Buttons began almost immediately a ministry of visitation in order to become acquainted with their field. Multitudes of contacts were made with varying reactions.

In April of 1951 Miss Isobel Fraser joined the mission staff, having had previous experience in Jewish work in Chicago and Fort Wayne, Indiana. She came from the First Brethren Church, of Fort Wayne, which church underwrote her support.

The nature of the work is not that of mass evangelism. It is rather that of personal visitation, distribution of literature, teaching of small Bible classes, children's work, and prayer meetings. Unlimited patience is an essential qualification for this work, for favorable response to the Gospel does not come quickly.

The Brethren Messianic Witness, although carefully supervised by the Home Missions Council, carries itself financially. It is not upon the budget as are the other home-mission projects because of the limited financial resources of the Council. Only money that is definitely designated for this work goes to it. But in spite of this limitation, God has shown His favor toward it. Foundations have been laid, some souls have been reclaimed, and the future is bright with promise.

A brief summary of the work of the Home Missions Council since the division of 1938-40 reveals a marked advance in this important phase of our denominational life. An examination of the reports issuing from the financial office of the Council shows that in the fiscal year of 1939-40 the grand total income for the work of the Council was \$25,244.66, whereas, in the year 1956-57 it was \$224,420.82, a 800 percent increase. In 1939-40 the record shows twenty places which were supported to a greater or lesser extent financially by the Council, whereas, in the year 1956-57, the number of points supported was forty-six, a gain of 233 percent. In the sixteen

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years between the above dates, scores of churches have become self-supporting as a result of the efforts of the Home Missions Council.

Both the Foreign Missionary Society and the Home Missions Council are directed by efficient staffs of officers which have their headquarters in Winona Lake, Indiana. More and more the latter place is becoming the headquarters for all the denominational interests of the Grace group of churches. This location is particularly advantageous for the offices of the home- and foreign-mission work because of its proximity to Grace Theological Seminary and College, which provides a large proportion of the future workers in both fields of service.

Since the women of the denomination have figured so prominently in the varied aspects of missionary work in the Brotherhood, something deserves to be said here respecting their work. Prior to the division of 1939 the women of the church had an organization called the Women's Missionary Society. This Society continues to operate among the women of the Ashland group. This organization originated under the name of the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor, coming into existence at the Annual Meeting of 1887, held at Ashland, Ohio, with Mary M. Sterling as the first president. The name was later changed to the Women's Missionary Society. The women of the Grace group organized themselves into the Women's Missionary Council at the General Conference assembled in Winona Lake, August 1938, when approximately one hundred forty women signed their names to the original membership roll. They elected Mrs. Homer A. Kent as the first president, Mrs. W. A. Ogden vice-president, Mrs. Carl Andlauer secretary, Mrs. Leo Polman, treasurer, and Mrs. Herman W. Koontz as financial secretary. Mrs. A. B. Kidder was appointed to be the first editor of the Council's printed material.⁴

From the very outset, God blessed this new organization. It has shown a practical interest in every phase of missionary work in the National Fellowship, foreign missions, home missions, and Grace Seminary and College. Annually the Council makes

⁴ Mrs. Homer A. Kent, *The Handbook of Missionary Facts*, p. 76.

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substantial contributions to these missionary projects. The organization exercises also a general oversight of the work of the Sisterhood of Mary and Martha, the young women's missionary society of the church, and both organizations collaborate in projecting their work in one monthly issue of *The Brethren Missionary Herald*. Four other presidents besides Mrs. Kent contributed much to the success of the Women's Missionary Council since its organization. They are Mrs. W. A. Ogden, Mrs. Herman Koontz, Mrs. Edward Bowman, and Mrs. Kenneth Ashman.

The Sisterhood of Mary and Martha, to which reference was made in the preceding paragraph, has performed a fine missionary ministry for the young women and girls of our Brotherhood. The first Sisterhood was started in Philadelphia in 1906 by Mrs. Mary Bauman, the first wife of Dr. Louis S. Bauman, who was at that time pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Philadelphia. Mrs. Bauman sensed the need for definite activity of a missionary character among the girls of the local congregation and so invited them to her home. They read in unison and discussed the account of Mary and Martha as told in Luke and made practical application thereof. They effected a local organization with the avowed purpose of deepening the spiritual life of the girls in the church and the spreading of the Gospel to the women and girls of other lands. Such meetings continued for several years. Then in 1913 the national work began embracing the following covenant: "I will not cease to make offerings of prayer, time, and money to the end that the daughters of sorrow in every land may know the love of Jesus."⁵

The first foreign missionary work on record of the Sisterhood was the rolling and sending of bandages to the lepers by individual societies. This sort of work has continued to the present time with increasing blessing to our medical work on the Africa field. The Sisterhood has also provided aid for the children of missionaries toward receiving a higher education by

⁵ "The History of the Sisterhood of Mary and Martha," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Mar. 9, 1946, p. 225.

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the establishment of a trust fund for this purpose. It has, furthermore, manifested definite interest in the care of our missionaries at home on furlough by first building the Bethany Mission Home in Ashland, Ohio. After the denominational division of 1939, the equity in this building belonging to the Sisterhood girls of the Grace group was transferred to the Foreign Missionary Society who put it into the purchase and furnishing of the Brethren Missionary Residence, located at (Fourth and Chestnut Streets) Winona Lake, Indiana.

Since the 1939 division, the work of the Sisterhood of Mary and Martha has continued in both the Ashland and Grace groups. The Sisterhoods have carried on an effective ministry in our churches across the land. In some churches Sisterhood has been divided into Junior, Intermediate, and Senior groups to accommodate the various ages.

In 1939 the national work of Sisterhood was reorganized. The headquarters for the Grace group is in Winona Lake, where its annual conferences are usually held in connection with our denominational conference. The headquarters of the Ashland group is at Ashland, Ohio.

The complete division between the two groups is clearly seen in their publication interests. Each group has its separate publication house, its separate publication board, and its separate publications. The Ashland group centers its publication interests at Ashland, Ohio, with *The Brethren Evangelist* as its main denominational organ. The Grace group centers its publication interests in Winona Lake, Indiana, *The Brethren Missionary Herald* being its major denominational publication.

Incident to the division of 1939, The Brethren Missionary Herald Company was incorporated early in 1940 to carry on the ministry of the printed page among the Grace Brethren. Rev. Charles W. Mayes, then pastor of the West Tenth Street Brethren Church, of Ashland, Ohio, became the first editor, with Dr. J. C. Beal serving as secretary of publications. The *Missionary Herald* was published weekly at the Herald Press, in Cleveland, Ohio, by the Brethren Missionary Herald Company, which occupied quarters in the First Brethren church,

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Fort Wayne, Indiana, owing to the generosity of the church and its energetic pastor, Rev. Leo Polman. The latter had much to do with the production of the magazine in those early days. Then with the rapid growth of this phase of the denominational work, need for more adequate facilities was clearly evident, whereupon a large, grey stone residence was purchased in Winona Lake in 1941 and was transformed into a publishing house.

In August 1953, Rev. Arnold R. Kriegbaum resigned as the pastor of the Grace Brethren Church of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and became editor of The Brethren Missionary Herald.

After a number of years of successful operation of the publishing interests at the Fourth and Chestnut Streets location, the board of trustees of The Brethren Missionary Herald Company and its efficient executive editor and business manager, Arnold R. Kriegbaum, realized that these quarters were not adequate for this growing missionary enterprise. With a vision for the future they acquired in December 1954, an ample building site in order to erect a modern building competent to house not only its own interests but also other denominational departments, such as the Foreign Missionary Society of the Brethren Church, the Brethren Home Missions Council, the National Sunday School Board of the Brethren Church, and the Brethren Youth Council. Hence it is often called the denominational office building of The Brethren Church. The total cost of the building, including real estate and fixtures, was \$139,000. It is advantageously located on King's Highway close to the seminary and college campus. The old building was sold in March 1956.

On the beautiful Sunday afternoon of August 26, 1956, the closing day of the 67th annual conference of the National Fellowship of Brethren Churches, the new building was dedicated in a fitting outdoor service in front of the structure with Rev. Robert D. Crees, president of the board of trustees of The Missionary Herald Company, presiding, and Dr. W. A. Ogden, executive vice president of Grace Seminary and College, delivering the dedicatory address. The large group in attend-

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ance to witness the ceremony recognized this as another noteworthy accomplishment in the growth of the church.

From its first issue dated January 6, 1940, the *Missionary Herald* proved to be a very popular production, selling at the first for the amazingly low price of one dollar per year. It was a truly cooperative affair, being issued in cooperation with the Foreign Missionary Society, the Home Missions Council, Grace Theological Seminary, the Women's Missionary Council, the National Christian Endeavor Union, and the Student Life Volunteers. With some minor changes this type of cooperation has continued to exist to the present time.

The Brethren Missionary Herald was preceded by a publication called *The Brethren Herald*, which is now considered as Volume I of *The Brethren Missionary Herald*. *The Brethren Herald*, which began appearing in February 1939, was the official organ of the Brethren Home Missions Council, with R. Paul Miller as its editor. Since, prior to the formation of the larger magazine, *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, it was the only magazine setting forth definitely the Grace viewpoint, it may rightfully be looked upon as the first volume of the denominational organ, even as the inauguration of *The Brethren Missionary Herald* in January of 1940 is Volume 2. In the very first editorial of the latter magazine, Dr. McClain comments upon the name of the magazine as follows:

In planning and launching this new magazine, which makes its bow in the year 1940, its sponsors made no mistake in their selection of an appropriate name. They began with the name, "The Brethren Herald," very happily chosen as the caption of the Home Missions Council magazine, and simply added the word "Missionary," placing it squarely in the center of the original name; a prophecy we trust, of the central place that missions shall hold in its pages. Thus the entire name contains three important words, each one indicating a specific task, and which taken together suggest the threefold policy and program of the magazine.*

Besides this major production, the Brethren Missionary Herald Company produces Sunday-school literature, books, pamphlets, and tracts, and carries on an extensive ministry in

*A. J. McClain, *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 2.

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the dissemination of all sorts of Christian literature and materials needed in carrying on of the Lord's work. The company is thoroughly alive to the challenge of the printed page.

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*The Present Situation
in The Brethren Church
(continued 1940-1958)*



16

Let us now consider the educational situation in The Brethren Church. The Ashland group continues to operate Ashland College, Ashland, Ohio, as its only institution of higher learning. It also maintains Ashland Theological Seminary in the same city. The Grace group operates Grace Theological Seminary which, since 1939, has been located at Winona Lake, Indiana. As already noted, upon first moving to Winona Lake, the school was housed on the third floor of the national headquarters building of the Free Methodist Church. Experiencing a steady growth and the limitations that rented quarters are bound to impose, it soon became obvious that the school had great need for a building of its own. Whereupon a beautiful tract of land comprising about three and one-half acres within the precincts of Winona Lake and adjacent to the Free Methodist building on the south were procured from the Winona Lake Christian Assembly.

Later it was realized that this site would not be large enough for a full scale development of a school with dormitories, parking space, and all needed facilities, and so by providential direction the board of trustees was able to procure in several interesting steps an ideal plot of ground of over thirty acres east of King's Highway and just outside the town limits of Winona Lake. A financial program was launched to make possible the construction of the contemplated seminary building, which at first was estimated to cost around \$100,000. However, with inflation, rising prices, and provision of added facilities, it was discovered that the building would cost in

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the neighborhood of \$335,000. The financial program referred to was climaxed with the notable ten-month plan, inaugurated in May 1950, and concluded in February 1951, which proved the basis of the monthly plan of support for the seminary from that time to the present.

Plans for the building having been carefully considered and finally adopted, a ground-breaking service was held on the chilly afternoon of May 24, 1949. After some delay, building operations actually got under way on April 6, 1950. The cornerstone was laid in an impressive ceremony on the Sunday afternoon of July 30, 1950. Such dignitaries as Dr. J. Palmer Muntz, director of the Winona Lake Bible Conference, the late Dr. Arthur W. McKee, business manager of the Winona Lake Christian Assembly, Mrs. William A. Sunday, a resident of Winona to the time of her death in the spring of 1957, Dr. Herman W. Koontz, pastor of the Winona Lake Brethren Church, and President Alva J. McClain of the Seminary, had part in the ceremonies of the occasion.

The words on the cornerstone express the purpose and basic foundation of the rising structure: "To our Lord Jesus Christ in whom we have redemption through His blood according to the riches of His grace."¹ The building was formally dedicated on the afternoon of Thursday, August 30, 1951, in connection with the National Fellowship conference of that year.² A capacity crowd filled the lower auditorium of the building, listened to the dedicatory address delivered by Dr. Charles W. Mayes, pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California, and took part in the dedication ceremony which was directed by President McClain. The prayer of dedication was offered by Rev. Arnold R. Kriebbaum, vice moderator of the National Fellowship of Brethren Churches. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, president of Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas, was present and offered greetings.

One familiar face was absent upon this occasion. Dr. Louis

¹ Homer A. Kent, "Took a Great Stone and Set it Up," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Sept. 2, 1950, p. 611.

² See Dedication Program for details.

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S. Bauman, who had played such a vital part in establishing and forwarding Grace Seminary, had been "loosed away upward" on November 8, 1950, just five days before he would have been 75 years of age. His heart would have rejoiced at this fulfillment of his dreams. It will not be out of place to remark at this point that a special memorial issue of the *Brethren Missionary Herald* under date of January 6, 1951, was devoted to a careful delineation of the life of this outstanding servant of the Lord who had done so much for his church. At the National Fellowship of August 1951, the Louis S. Bauman Memorial Lectureship was established to be delivered annually for a period of fifteen years at Grace Seminary. The first in this series of lectures was delivered by Dr. Charles W. Mayes, Dr. Bauman's successor in the pastorate at Long Beach, during the winter of 1955.

The school session of 1951-1952 was the first to be held in the new building. However, the first public service in the new building was the class service of May 1951, which was held in the chapel, largely as a favor to this class which had confidently hoped to be in the new building during the last semester, but was hindered because of unavoidable delays in completion.

When plans for the seminary building were drawn, only an adequate building for seminary purposes was in mind. The plans envisioned were thought to be sufficient for the denomination's seminary needs for years to come. But shortly after this time there was a growing feeling in the church that there ought to be associated with our seminary program at least two years of college training. It was pointed out that the Brethren are losing many splendid young people because of having to send them away to colleges not our own. Why not conserve these young people by introducing something approximating junior college work at the seminary under the control and direction of the seminary? The idea caught fire, a committee was appointed by conference in 1947 to study the matter, and in the fall of 1948 the collegiate division was established with thirty-two students.

The venture proved successful but inadequate. Many thought

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there ought to be the regular four-year college curriculum in the school leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. And so with the approval of the board of trustees this four-year plan was introduced in the fall of 1953. With the inauguration of the four-year collegiate course the college immediately began to grow rapidly, and bids fair to continue this growth. During its first year of operation, the growth in the college was approximately one hundred per cent. Each succeeding year has witnessed a healthy increase so that in the fall of 1957 the number of registrations was 207.

With the addition of the collegiate division, now for practical purposes known as Grace College, the seminary's splendid new building, which at the first was thought to be adequate for many years to come, was discovered to be inadequate to care for the needs of a well-rounded collegiate program in addition to the needs of the seminary.

On the morning of March 21, 1957, a ground-breaking service was held on the site of the first two units of a building project to cost over \$400,000 which will greatly alleviate the pressing need for added facilities in the college. Dr. Glenn O'Neal, pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Inglewood, California, was the speaker for the occasion which was attended by the combined student bodies of the seminary and college, the faculty, and many visitors, including Mayor Jack Engle, of Warsaw, Indiana, who brought words of greeting. This first unit will be a physical education building. The second unit of the project is under construction (1958). This unit will be an educational building containing classrooms and other necessary facilities for a rapidly increasing student body. Actual building operations on this united project began several weeks later, on the morning of June 12, when excavating machinery started work on the site of the project.

Previous to this, in 1954, a token answer to the school's pressing need for more building facilities came in the purchase of a large residence on King's Highway from Dr. Paul Bauman. This property joined the campus on the southwest. It was soon transformed into a music conservatory and opened for use in

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the fall of 1955. The acquisition of this property not only provided for more housing, but also made possible frontage for the school on an important highway and secured an entrance to the campus by a new road from the west.

Also in the fall of 1955 arrangements were made with the Rodeheaver Company whereby the Westminster Hotel, located two blocks from the campus, could be used for a college dormitory. This has met a great need because of the financial inability of the school to erect sufficient dormitory space at the present time.

In addition to the outstanding aim of preparing many young people for entrance into the seminary for definite training for Christian service, a special challenge faces the collegiate division to supply teachers for the Christian Day Schools which are now arising in increasing numbers, and also to supply Christian teachers adequately prepared to meet the appalling need in the public schools across the land. To meet this need the school is working in harmony with the requirements of the Indiana State Department of Education and from them has received accreditation on the state level (1955).

Furthermore, it is now in the process of working toward regional accreditation by the North Central Association. The college presently grants the degree of Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education in addition to the regular Bachelor of Arts degree and offers a curriculum that will qualify the applicant to receive certification to teach in secondary schools.

While this effort is being put forth, the board of trustees and the faculty of Grace Theological Seminary are exercising all possible vigilance lest modernism and worldliness creep in so as to cause a turning away from the faith, as has been experienced in so many colleges across the land. Safeguards of every helpful kind are being erected so that the precious faith "once delivered unto the saints" shall not be set aside with resulting tragedy.

It has been because of the increasing realization of the importance of Christian education that a number of our Brethren churches have deemed it wise to enter into a Chris-

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tian day-school program. This movement got under way in the Brethren church, owing largely to the vision of Dr. Louis S. Bauman and the practical zeal of Dr. Charles W. Mayes, both pastors of the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach, California. The first such school opened in September of 1947 in the facilities of the Seal Beach Brethren Church of California and largely under the direction of the First Brethren Church, of Long Beach. A year later the school moved to North Long Beach, adjacent to the Second Brethren Church of that place now officially called the North Long Beach Brethren Church. From this humble beginning there has been continued growth in this school until now teaching is offered from the grades through high school.

As a result of the success of the pioneering venture in Long Beach, other churches in the southern California area have been led to open similar schools. No doubt the movement will eventually invade all sections of our Brotherhood. Writing in the *Brethren Missionary Herald* on the establishment of the Brethren day-school movement, Dr. Mayes has said:

We believe that the starting of our day school is one of the new and effectual avenues of service open to the Brethren. For many reasons the day in which we live demands such effort on the part of God's people. As never before we need education with a Christian emphasis from the kindergarten up. We trust that in some measure our school may be an encouragement to other churches who contemplate a similar program.^a

And so it has proved to be and Dr. Mayes has been an outstanding leader in the movement.

In summary, on the matter of education, it is safe to say that The Brethren Church, particularly the National Fellowship, is more alive to the importance of Christian education than ever before in her history.

Numerically speaking, the Ashland and Grace groups are fairly equally divided. It has been previously noted that at the time of the division in 1939 the Ashland group was able to gain control of the National Conference only by eliminating

^a Charles W. Mayes, "The Brethren Day School," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Dec. 20, 1947, p. 116f.

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over eighty delegates of the Grace persuasion. Even then the margin of difference was not great. Since then statistics seem to indicate that the Grace group has shown a greater growth than has the Ashland group. For instance, according to the 1953 statistical report the Ashland group reported a total membership of 18,610 from 109 churches, whereas the Grace group reported 20,828 members from 137 churches.⁴

From the standpoint of controversy, it is fair to say that for the most part since the division of 1939 there has been a diminishing of antagonistic effort. Each group has been satisfied to forward its own work without interfering with the other. Happily this is increasingly so as time passes. However there have been several lawsuits involving church property. It should be clearly observed at this point that in all of these cases the legal procedure was initiated by members of the Ashland group. In accordance with the teachings of I Corinthians 6:1-8 and the traditional attitude of Brethren from the very beginning of their existence, members of the Grace group has always refrained from initiating any legal action. Whenever they are brought into court, however, the Grace group have felt justified in defending themselves, even as the Apostle Paul did when he appealed unto Caesar.

The first of these lawsuits involved the First Brethren Church, of Dayton, Ohio, of which Dr. Russell D. Barnard was pastor. Because of the influence of this church, one of the largest in the denomination, and because of the issues involved, some attention needs to be given to it here. In spite of the fact that the pastor of this church and the large majority of its membership were upon the Grace side of the denominational issue, there was a minority group, led by the vice president of the Ashland College board of trustees, George F. Kem, which still supported that institution.

This minority group withdrew from the First Brethren Church and formed a new church corporation called The Brethren Church of Dayton. This group, aided by Ashland College

⁴ Alva J. McClain, "A Comparative Study in Statistics," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Jan. 23, 1954, p. 52.

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leaders, entered suit against the trustees and pastor of the original church for control of its property. Their contention was that since the pastor and majority of that church were no longer members of the General Conference, and because they refused any longer to support Ashland College or other projects under the domination of that school, and because the church had voted to support Grace Seminary, therefore the First Brethren Church of Dayton had departed from the Brethren faith and should no longer have possession of property accumulated for the purpose of extending this faith.

It can readily be seen that this suit was freighted with tremendous importance for the future. It was a test case. Would the court uphold the Ashland contention arguing for conference control or would it confirm the Grace viewpoint, held by the majority of the Dayton congregation, to the effect that the individual congregation is sovereign and has the inalienable right to run its own affairs so long as it does not depart from the Brethren faith?

The trial was held in the Court of Common Pleas, Montgomery County, Ohio, and the case was finally submitted to the court under date of November 6, 1940. The decision rendered by Judge Cecil on February 17, 1941, was a welcome triumph for the pastor and the First Brethren Church, of Dayton, and for all those holding to the Grace viewpoint in the Brethren Church.⁵ Dr. Alva J. McClain, in his careful analysis of the Dayton decision, appearing in the March 8, 1941, issue of the *Brethren Missionary Herald* has set forth the vital decisions of the court as follows:

I. The Dayton Court decided that the government of the Brethren Church is *congregational* in form.

II. The Dayton Court decided that the Brethren Church did not abandon the principles of congregational government in the year 1915. (That is, by the adoption by General Conference at that time of the Manual of Procedure which has governed the Conference since that time).

III. The Dayton Court decided that local Brethren Churches

⁵ J. Cecil, "Judge Cecil's Decision in the Dayton Case," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Mar. 8, 1941, p. 3.

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have a right to withdraw support from church conferences and cooperating organizations.

IV. The Dayton Court decided that a local Brethren Church has a right to withdraw support from a school or board and give support to other schools or boards.

V. The Dayton Court decided that a local Brethren Church may withdraw its support from any conference or board and still continue to be a Brethren Church.⁶

This latter point, as Dr. McClain contends, was the very heart of the dispute at Dayton because the Ashland group argued that the Dayton church, in transferring its support from Ashland College to Grace Seminary, had left the Brethren doctrine and ceased to be a true Brethren church. Dr. McClain concludes his analysis by the very cogent observation that because of the congregational nature of The Brethren Church, which the Dayton Court supported, the Ashland group have departed from the fundamental doctrine of The Brethren Church because they have attempted to set up conferences with ecclesiastical powers over the local churches, and have attempted to enforce these powers in the legal attack upon Pastor Barnard and his people.

Following the Dayton decision, the Ashland group appealed to a higher court (the Appellate Court, Columbus, Ohio), which sustained the decision of the lower court. With such a clear-cut decision in favor of the Grace Brethren, it was hoped that this would be the end of all such legal controversy. However, it was not so to be.

An action was instituted against the First Brethren Church, of Peru, Indiana, in 1943. This church was pastored by Rev. Robert A. Ashman, and was in a different situation to that of the First Brethren Church, of Dayton, Ohio, in that it was under the direction of the Ashland-controlled Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. The trial took place in the County courthouse at Peru, Indiana, beginning April 12, 1943, and continued for five and one-half days. The purpose of the suit was to obtain control of the Peru church property. The action was instituted by Claud Studebaker and others representing the

⁶ A. J. McClain, "An Analysis of the Dayton Decision," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Mar. 8, 1941, p. 2.

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Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, the Indiana District trustees, and three members of the Peru church. It was claimed that the pastor had broken his contract with the mission board. Furthermore, it asserted that the congregation had forfeited its right to use of the property because of alleged departure from true Brethren doctrines and practices, and because the congregation refused to support the boards and institutions of the old conference.

One thing of particular interest in connection with this trial was the testimony presented by the Ashland contingent to the essentiality of trine immersion to salvation. Their contention was that the Grace Brethren have departed from the traditional faith of the Tunkers in this regard. This, of course, as was brought out in the trial, is a matter of interpretation and the truth is that the Grace Brethren have not disregarded trine immersion as the proper form of baptism but contend that it is essential, not for salvation, but for obedience.

The decision of the court, however, rendered in a lengthy statement, under date of October 6, 1944, was in favor of the Ashland group and against the Peru church. As a result of the adverse decision, the pastor of the Peru church and most of his members were forced to leave their beautiful church building, but ere long plans for a new building were made and the new organization and church became a completed reality under the name, Peru Brethren Church. The latter church has since erected its new building and on Sunday, June 16, 1957, burned the mortgage that stood against it.

The third of these unfortunate church trials involved the church at Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, in 1947. The trial convened during the week of June 16 of that year. It was modeled considerably after the fashion of the Peru, Indiana, litigation. Late in 1946 the minority Ashland group of the Meyersdale church, through its legal counsel, issued a 22-point *Bill of Complaint* against Gerald B. Polman, pastor of the church, and his "Graceite" followers, charging the Grace group with having departed from the traditional Brethren viewpoint and therefore no longer entitled to possession of the present church building.

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Soon after this the pastor, Gerald Polman, and his associates presented a longer 23-point *answer* to all the charges of their opponents.

In due time the court trial followed in which the principal witnesses for the Grace group were Dr. A. J. McClain, president, and Dr. Herman A. Hoyt, professor at Grace Seminary. Among the witnesses for the Ashland group was Dr. Willis E. Ronk, pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Goshen, Indiana.

The decision rendered was similar in content to that of the Peru, Indiana, case. In April 1948, Judge Norman T. Boose ruled that the Grace group, including about 170 of the 200-member congregation, was not truly Brethren in its teachings, and was therefore not entitled to use of the church property unless it abided by true Brethren teachings. A period of time was allowed by the court for the adjustment, if possible, of the difficulties which were troubling the contestants. Since no adjustment was realized, under date of October 7 of the same year, Judge Boose rendered a final decision giving the Ashland group absolute control of the Meyersdale church and its administration. This adverse decision did not discourage the ousted group. Instead it appeared glad to leave the scene of conflict, and form another church organization, and build a new church, which was accomplished in a remarkably short time.

After this episode of litigation, there was a cessation of legal procedure until 1956 when George T. Ronk took the initiative in a legal action to take over the building and parsonage of the Leon (Iowa) Brethren Church. Mr. Ronk gathered about him a handful of Ashland sympathizers who were members of the Leon church and bent every possible effort toward ousting the main body from control and possession of the above named church. Mr. Ronk seems to have a special interest in this church because he was the founder and the first pastor of the organization. The affair came to a climax with court action in December of 1956 after some months of hopes and rumors that the whole matter might be amicably settled out of court.

The plaintiffs charged in the trial at Leon in the district

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court in and for Decatur county that the majority group in the church had "departed in certain particulars from the fundamental faith of the Brethren." This charge was firmly denied by the defendants which included the pastor of the church, Rev. Ronald R. Robinson. The plaintiffs were especially vocal in charging that the so-called Grace group had become heretical in teaching the doctrine of eternal security, or the belief that if a person is once saved he is always saved. They were equally determined to show that the majority group had departed from the faith in asserting that salvation is by faith and by faith alone. The defendants stoutly denied that their beliefs in these matters constituted a departure from historic Brethrenism. They claimed to be in perfect harmony with the beliefs set forth in the doctrinal statement known as *The Message of the Brethren Ministry*, which statement was shown to have been approved by ministers on both sides in the Ashland-Grace controversy.

The charge that the majority group had departed from the historic position of the Tunker church in the matter of baptism by denying its essentiality to salvation was denied by presenting testimony from the Ashland constituents of former days to the effect that baptism is not essential to salvation, only to obedience, which is the Grace viewpoint.

The charge that the defendants had departed from true Brethrenism by failing to support such institutions as Ashland College, Ashland Seminary, and the Missionary Board was refuted on the basis of the principle of congregational church government, which principle has operated in The Brethren Church from the very beginning. Brethren churches are independent and do not have to support any of these or other institutions unless they see fit to do so. In the court it was pointed out that there were Brethren people and Brethren churches long before any of these organizations came into existence, even before the idea of church conferences was instituted.

Following the conclusion of the trial, which lasted well over a week, H. J. Kittleman, judge of the Third Judicial District

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of Iowa, after due deliberation, handed down a verdict in favor of the defendants. (*See page 216, Appendix.)

Near the end of his carefully worded fifteen-page decision Judge Kittleman said: "The Court concludes that the Leon Brethren Church is under an independent and congregational form of government; that the defendants are the regularly selected officers and members of the Leon Brethren Church; that the defendants have not departed from the fundamental doctrines and beliefs of The Brethren Church . . . that the equities are with the defendants and that the real and personal property of the Leon Brethren Church is not being diverted to teachings contrary to the established fundamental doctrines of The Brethren Church and the purpose for which said church was organized; that the petition of the plaintiffs should be dismissed."

On February 25, 1957, the court was informed by the attorneys for the plaintiffs of their intention to appeal to the Supreme Court of Iowa. However, on January 1, 1958, the plaintiffs determined not to prosecute the appeal, and the decision became final.

The main witnesses for the defendants were Dr. Alva J. McClain, Dr. Paul R. Bauman, Rev. R. R. Robinson, pastor of the Leon church, Rev. Miles Taber and Rev. Raymond Kettell, both former pastors of the Leon church. The main witnesses for the plaintiffs were Rev. George T. Ronk, his brother Albert, pastor of the First Brethren Church, of Waterloo, Iowa, Dr. Claud Studebaker, and Frank Garber, a layman of Cheyenne, Wyoming.

The victory for the defendants in this case was in no small measure the result of the brilliant work of Attorney Leonard Bosgraf of the legal firm of Fisher, Bosgraf and Mackenzie, of Chicago, although the plaintiffs were also represented by able attorneys, Stuart and Stuart, of Chariton, Iowa.

Statistics on these legal matters do not favor either the Ashland or the Grace group of churches to any appreciable extent. As we have seen, the Ashland group won the cases

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involving the Peru, Indiana, and the Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, churches, while the Grace constituency won the cases involving the Dayton, Ohio, and the Leon, Iowa, cases. The Grace group also came off the victor in the William Johansen case involving a bequest. The gains on either side probably have not made up for the losses incurred through dragging into worldly courts our denominational differences. What the future story of litigation may be in The Brethren Church either as regards obtaining or retaining property or a decision as to which group has the right to the use of the name "Brethren" as a denominational designation, only time will tell. It is confidently hoped by many on both sides of the unfortunate controversy that a gentleman's agreement may be entered into to the effect that it will be far better for all concerned to stay out of the courts.

Since the division of 1936-1939, work among the young people of the National Fellowship has been greatly stimulated and has received a more careful guidance. Along about 1938 and before, there was the feeling that our young people were being neglected, particularly in relation to our national conference programs. Then in 1938 a National Youth Camp was organized and operated at Bethany Camp in Winona at the same time as the meeting of annual conference. Rev. Leo Polman and his wife, Leila, were the directing forces in this first national camp and in others which were to follow through 1950 when the direction was assumed by the National Youth Fellowship. These national camps have proved a real boon to the young people's work of our denomination. They have given impetus to similar district camps across the nation, such as Camp Buckeye (Ohio), Camp Tahquitz Pines (Calif.), Camp Keystone (Pa.), Camp Grace (Va.), Crystal Lake Camp (Ind.), and others.

The Brethren Youth Fellowship was organized in 1946. It is the successor to the Brethren National Christian Endeavor Union and operates under the Brethren National Youth Council. In 1948 Rev. Ralph Colburn became the first full-time director of youth work in the denomination. Under his competent leadership all phases of youth work, including Boys Club,

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camp work, B.Y.F. work, and Sisterhood of Mary and Martha have shown a marked expansion.

After a period of about four years when the youth work was without a national director due to Ralph Colburn's return to the pastorate, Ernest H. Bearinger, from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, and a student at Grace College, took over the leadership in March of 1957. The latest organization to be instituted in the youth program is *The King's Men*, which is geared to minister to boys of the upper high school and college levels.

Since the division of 1936-39, careful attention has been given toward strengthening all of those arms of the church which minister toward evangelism. Consideration has already been given to the regular missionary organizations of the church. Other organizations have exerted effective efforts to this end also. There is the National Fellowship of Brethren Laymen, an organization of laymen in the Brotherhood with the avowed purpose of stimulating personal evangelism in the local churches. It is their aim also to aid local pastors in every possible way in forwarding the work of the church. In addition to these things they contribute financially to the work of the Crusade Teams which operate under the leadership of the Board of Evangelism of the Brethren Church. They provide aid for needy students at Grace Theological Seminary, and contribute to the work of Brethren Boys Clubs.

Then there was the establishment of the Board of Evangelism in 1947 by the National Fellowship, with Owen E. Hacker, a layman of the First Brethren Church, of Dayton, Ohio, as the first president. The aim of this new board was a more extensive promotion of evangelistic effort in the church. Largely through its influence the Brethren Evangelistic Crusade came into existence, which in 1953 put two evangelistic teams into the field. The first crusade campaign started in Long Beach First Church, March 1, 1953, Rev. R. Paul Miller being the evangelist. Since that time this movement has progressed to the end that Crusade teams have appeared in many churches in every part of our Brotherhood. The aim of these teams is to

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appear in all types of churches, large and small, making available the best in evangelism to all our constituency.

Since the division, Sunday-school work has also been revitalized and reorganized. Beginning in 1954, Rev. Harold H. Etling assumed the position of National Director of Brethren Sunday School work. Mr. Etling left the pastorate of the First Brethren Church, of Akron, Ohio, to devote his full time to a phase of the church's work which many felt had been neglected for some time. He has been instrumental in emphasizing Sunday-school rallies, contests, teacher training, and in organizing a National Sunday School Convention which now meets just prior to the National Fellowship conference. He also has been responsible for the output of up-to-date literature on Sunday-school activity. All of these efforts have resulted in increased attendance and interest in the work of the Sunday school.

This emphasis is especially appropriate because the Brethren often have taken credit for the origination of the Sunday-school movement. Martin G. Brumbaugh states, after speaking of the efforts of Ludwig Hoecker, a member of the Germantown church, and later connected with the Ephrata movement, in teaching young people the Word of God, "The Brethren may, therefore, justly claim to be the founders of Sunday Schools."^{*} Sad to say, however, the Brethren did not develop the idea as they should have and later even opposed it. It is good to note in these present days a vigorous endeavor to give the Sunday school its rightful place in the work of the church.

There are many other things which might be written concerning the events and personalities which have contributed to the history of our beloved church. However, the limits of this production forbid their inclusion. We trust that what has been presented in the foregoing pages will stir the hearts of our readers to a greater interest in the subject of this book and to a fervent desire to pray for our church's future progress. It is the writer's earnest hope that the National Fellowship of

^{*}Martin G. Brumbaugh. *History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1910), p. 464.

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Brethren Churches may always be a shining witness for the Gospel of God's infinite grace and a faithful contender for "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints."

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Appendix

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE STATE OF IOWA,
IN AND FOR DECATUR COUNTY

LEON BRETHREN CHURCH, H. P. WILEY,
VIOLA F. WILEY, G. T. RONK,
C. B. RYAN and MYRA RYAN, TRUSTEES
FOR THE LEON BRETHREN CHURCH,
and

H. P. WILEY, VIOLA F. WILEY,
G. T. RONK, C. B. RYAN, MYRA
RYAN and W. L. THOMAS, as
Individuals

-vs-

RAY ANDREWS, GARLD SHORT,
WENDELL DAVIS, C. P. CHRISTENSEN,
MIKE WARD and R. R. ROBINSON,
Defendants

FINDINGS AND DECREE

FILED JAN. 28, 1957

Roe Poush, Clerk

The plaintiffs, a minority group of the Leon Brethren Church of Leon, Iowa, brought action against the defendants asking an injunction restraining the defendants from use of the Leon Brethren Church and parsonage, and an order requiring the defendants to turn the church and parsonage over to them for their use and the use of others who believe in the doctrines and tenets of the Brethren Church incorporated in Ashland, Ohio. The plaintiffs appeared in person and by their attorneys Stuart & Stuart of Chariton, Iowa. The defendants appeared in person and by their attorneys, Fisher, Bosgrath & Mackenzie of Chicago, Illinois, and Killmar & Reynoldson of Osceola, Iowa.

The plaintiffs represent a dissident minority composed of about five people who were members of the Leon Brethren Church represented by the defendants, the plaintiff H. P. Wiley, a convert who was never a member of the Leon Brethren

Church but is now a member of the reorganized group, other converts and members of the Brethren Church who have transferred their membership to Leon from distant points. The minority claims to represent in all approximately twenty people. The majority group numbers approximately 125 members, and at one time the church had a membership of over 550.

The lot upon which the Leon Brethren Church is located was acquired and the church built during the ministry of Rev. George Ronk in 1914. He belongs to what is spoken of in the record as the Ashland, Ohio, or minority group. The parsonage was acquired by money given by Rev. Miles Taber, a member of what is spoken of in the record as the Winona Lake, Indiana, or majority group, defendants herein. During the late war Rev. Taber worked in the Leon post office and donated half of the money he received as salary for preaching in the Leon Brethren Church to a fund which was used to purchase the parsonage on July 12, 1943. The deeds conveying the real estate for the church and the parsonage contained no trust provision, but were straight warranty deeds to the Leon Brethren Church.

The plaintiffs charge that the defendants have departed in certain particulars from the fundamental faith of the Brethren Church. This is denied by the defendants and they claim, as did their predecessors, the founders of the Brethren Church in the convention of 1892, that they are not a separate denomination but are teaching the same doctrines as were held and taught by the original founders of the church. Each group claims their teachings are in harmony with the teachings of the founders. The differences, if any, between the two groups culminated in the annual meeting of the Brethren Church held in 1940, when annual conference refused to seat certain delegates because they did not support Ashland College and other church institutions. During the history of the church there have been differences between various groups and churches, as seems inevitable in churches with a congregational form of government and liberty of interpretation. These groups all trace their beginning to a common source.

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In 1708 Alexander Mack and seven other persons entered into a covenant with each other as brethren. They baptised by triune immersion and were called Tunkers, Dunkers or Dunkards. From this group came the German Baptists and through a progressive movement in the German Baptist or Dunkard Church emerged the Brethren Church. The first immigrants from the other church arrived in America in 1719, when parts of twenty families arrived on a Flemish vessel. The progressive convention of the Tunker Church was held on June 29th and 30th 1882 at Ashland, Ohio. A declaration of principles was adopted by this convention. The founders of the Brethren Church as a result of the progressive movement did not consider themselves as secessionists from the original church organized by Alexander Mack in Germany in 1708. It seems what they objected to was the increasing domination by the annual conference over the affairs of the churches, and they insisted on full autonomy or congregational government by each local church of its own affairs. The following resolution was passed at this convention held in 1892:

“RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this convention that, as we are the true conservators of the doctrines of the Brethren Church, and have never strayed from the church founded by our fathers, nothing done in this meeting shall be construed as a secession or departure from the original church organized in Germany, in 1708, or from the principles of the gospel as interpreted by our fathers, until the intervention of human traditions and the usurpation of authority by men in control of annual meeting. In every principle of non-conformity to the world and the practice of the gospel ordinances, we stand where we always have stood, and by the grace of God always will stand.”

According to Holsinger in his history of the Tunker Church, it was agreed to hold general conferences, “when necessary or circumstances demand, and then only.”

At the Dayton convention the following resolution was adopted:

“RESOLVED, That the brethren heretofore known as Progressive, those known as Congregational, and those known as Leedy Brethren are all one body in Christ, and that all sectarian titles that theretofore existed shall be forever dropped, and we

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will hereafter be known and know each other by the gospel name Brethren." Holsinger's History, page 541.

There is one outstanding characteristic of the Brethren observed as one reads the history of these people. That is their independence of mind. They insisted at all times on keeping in the local churches absolute control of their own affairs. The Articles of Incorporation of the Brethren Church of Ashland, Ohio, Defendants' Exhibit 19 in the record, reads in part as follows:

"Third: The purpose for which this corporation is formed is to perpetuate and extend the Christian Religion and the influence of the Gospel and to that end to provide the harmony, efficiency and progress of all local Brethren Churches in the United States without interfering with congregational control and government or seeking to set up or establish any creed but the New Testament, to further that purpose all members of Brethren Churches in the United States may become members of this corporation."

The plaintiffs' witnesses Rev. George Ronk and Dr. Claude Studebaker testified that there were Brethren Churches before there was an annual conference and the church is congregational in character. And further that a Brethren church could be and remain a Brethren church if it did not send delegates to the annual conference. In fact, the evidence further establishes that any Brethren church is at liberty to associate in fellowship with any other Brethren church, or group of churches, or conference, and still remain a Brethren church. Furthermore, a search of the entire record fails to disclose any power given to the annual conference to legislate on ecclesiastic matters for the churches. The churches were established as autonomous bodies. They have never by any constitution or delegation of authority authorized annual conference to set up a creed or lay down doctrines which must be taught or followed by the member churches. Plaintiffs' Exhibit 27, the manual of procedure for the Brethren Church states, "It shall have no power to interfere with the work of any local church nor with the work of the several district conferences." The articles of incorporation of the Leon Brethren Church provide: "The members of this

church reserve to themselves the control of its purely spiritual and charitable affairs." Defendants' Exhibit 20.

The Court finds that the form of government of the Brethren Church is independent or congregational in character and that the failure of the Leon Brethren Church to send delegates to the conference of Brethren Churches at Ashland, Ohio, or its failure to support Ashland College, or purchase its Sunday School material and supplies from the Brethren Publishing Company of Ashland, Ohio, did not constitute a departure from the fundamental beliefs or doctrines of the church, or cause the Leon Brethren Church to become a separate denomination. This question was not raised by the pleadings but was raised by the evidence.

Upon motion the plaintiffs set out two specific doctrines of the Brethren Church from which the defendants had departed and charged them with heretical teachings in this respect. The two doctrines were enumerated as, first; the teaching of eternal security or once saved, always saved, and; Second, the teaching that there was salvation by faith alone, or by faith plus nothing. These allegations are denied by the defendants.

In the notice and demand for peaceful possession, defendants' Exhibit 35, the charge is made that the defendants were teaching that, "Man, having received the dispensation of Grace set forth in the gospel, may even lie, steal for a good purpose, commit adultery, commit murder, or break any other of the commandments of God,—yet would not be lost but would be equally secure for his soul's redemption because God cannot lie * * * *."

This is the extreme teaching of eternal security and is known in the religious encyclopedias as antinomianism. The encyclopedia defines this word as the doctrine or opinion that a perfect Christian is freed from obligation to keep the precepts of the moral law. In his testimony Dr. McClain denies ever teaching this doctrine. He stated on the stand when speaking of antinomianism: "I regard it with absolute horror as indicated in my notes." He was asked the question: "Q Did anyone to your knowledge preach or teach that doctrine in the Brethren Church

at any time?" His answer was, "I know of no one who has ever taught anything like that." The record substantiates the statement that this extreme view of eternal security was never taught by the defendants at any time, and was never taught in the Leon Brethren Church.

The Brethren Church has no written creed. Its creed is the New Testament. It become difficult in such case to determine exactly what the fundamental beliefs of the church are. As time passes they change. Following is an interesting statement on this phase of the Brethren Church, taken from Benjamin Franklin, his autobiography, from Harvard Classics, Vol. 1, pages 115 and 116:

"These embarrassments that the Quakers suffer'd from having establish'd and published it as one of their principles that no kind of war was lawful, and which, being once published, they could not afterwards, however they might change their minds, easily get rid of, reminds me of what I think a more prudent conduct in another sect among us, that of the Dunkers. I was acquainted with one of its founders, Michael Welfare, soon after it appear'd. He complained to me that they were grievously calumniated by the zealots of other persuasions, and charg'd with abominable principles and practices, to which they were utter strangers. I told him this had always been the case with new sects, and that, to put a stop to such abuse, I imagin'd it might be well to publish the articles of their belief, and the rules of their discipline. He said that it had been propos'd among them, but not agreed to, for this reason: 'When we were first drawn together as a society', says he, 'it had pleased God to enlighten our minds so far as to see that some doctrines, which we once esteemed truths, were errors; and that others, which we had esteemed errors, were real truths. From time to time He has been pleased to afford us farther light, and our principles have been improving, and our errors diminishing. Now we are not sure that we are arrived at the end of this progression, and at the perfection of spiritual or theological knowledge; and we fear that if we should once print our confession of faith, we should feel ourselves as if bound and confin'd by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive farther improvement, and our successors still more so, as conceiving what we their elders and founders had done, to be something sacred, never to be departed from.

"This modesty in a sect is perhaps a singular instance in the history of mankind, every other sect supposing itself in possession of all truth, and that those who differ are so far in the wrong; like a man traveling in foggy weather, those at some

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distance before him on the road he sees wrapped up in the fog, as well as those behind him, and also the people in the fields on each side, but near him all appears clear, tho' in truth he is as much in the fog as any of them."

The plaintiffs and other Brethren ministers testified as witnesses for the plaintiff. They testified that the doctrine of eternal security had never been a doctrine of the Brethren Church. Opposed to this is the testimony of Brethren ministers, witnesses for the defendant, who testify that Alexander Mack, the founder of the church himself believed and taught eternal security. I have been unable to find this in any of the Mack writings contained in the record, except in the encyclopedic references in Defendants' Exhibit 66, which state that Mack was a Calvinist. To determine just what teachings in the church have been tolerated, and what doctrines have been taught we must turn to the church papers and conference reports and minutes introduced in evidence.

In the Moderator's Address by Willis E. Ronk, Defendants' Exhibit 11, in an address given before the Brethren Annual Conference, 1937, and published as the conference minutes by the Brethren Evangelist, the following statement regarding the practice and doctrines of the Church is made:

"As to specific doctrines and practices other than I have suggested, I simply refer you to the Message of the Brethren Ministers. This message has been so widely accepted that it serves well as a guide in matters of belief. Fear has been expressed by some, that an attempt will be made to add to these articles of belief and gradually narrow the range of our liberty, until liberty will be unknown. May I state the matter thus—as to doctrine, "in essentials unity", have we not agreed that this shall be the basis of our teaching or in other words the things which we consider essential? Then beyond this, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity. Thus far we have agreed and to seek to push every individual into a certain mould, making him conform to every detail of belief, beyond the statement of the ministers is to foster confusion and strife."

In the Brethren Evangelist, January 13, 1926, issue, Rev. Willis Ronk in an address delivered at the Ohio Conference stated:

"Each succeeding generation builds from the foundation of the

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one preceding. To reject the wisdom of other generations, because it is not our own is the height of folly. We are building upon the foundations laid by Alexander Mack and his co-workers; may we also leave a doctrinal foundation for those with their rights of interpretation.

"For the purpose of comparison, which this subject implies, some doctrinal statement is necessary. Also the statements which one might present, I am of the opinion that none could be found as agreeable to as large a body of our people as 'The Message of the Brethren Ministry'. I believe that it pretty accurately defines the position of a large percentage of the Brethren. It hardly seems necessary to read the statement, yet for the purpose in mind I believe it will be best to do so."

Regarding this Message of the Brethren Ministry being the fundamental doctrine of the Brethren Church, Rev. George Ronk wrote in the Brethren Evangelist of December 21, 1935, the following:

"About twenty years ago there was considerable disturbance over the question of Fundamentalism and Liberalism. With the writing of the Message of the Brethren Ministry, in 1916, not as a creed but as a statement of understanding, it was hoped the doctrinal content of Brethrenism might be settled for the long view."

In the Message of the Brethren Ministry, Defendants' Exhibit 23, there is no specific mention of the doctrine of eternal security or salvation by faith alone, except as contained in paragraphs 5 and 9. The doctrines taught by the defendants would not transgress any of the basic doctrines as set out in The Message of the Brethren Ministry.

The doctrine of eternal security as being preached by the defendants in the Leon Church and by the Winona Lake, Indiana, Brethren, as nearly as I can determine from the mass of evidence on the subject, seems to be set out succinctly in the statement made in the Moderator's Address, delivered by Dr. Alva J. McClain at the 1934 conference of the Brethren Church. This address was accepted by the Brethren Church before the 1939 division and published in the Brethren Evangelist of September 22, 1934, with approval. In setting forth his belief in this theory of salvation the moderator stated:

"Many among us are discovering anew the spiritual strength

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and assurance which are in the Biblical truth of Eternal Security. As a personal testimony I have often said that the greatest moment of my life came when God in Christ saved my soul. And the second greatest moment came when I found from the Word of God that SALVATION IS SAFE. But precious as this truth is, we must not forget to preach the Biblical demand for that personal holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. The Apostle Paul taught security for all who are truly born of God, but not security for men no matter what they did or how they lived. The hyper-Calvinist preaches the promises and explains away the warnings. The Arminian preaches the warnings and explains away the promises. But we should preach both, and remember that God may use his warnings as one way of bringing to pass the promises. There is no contradiction between the two except in the logic of man's finite reason. The truth is not that man will be saved no matter how he lives, but that men who are really saved will be careful how they live. This, the Biblical view, safeguards both Christian assurance and the moral life. If we preach Security at the expense of the moral life, we shall at last lose both. And do not forget that the contrary is also true."

This statement of the doctrine of eternal security before the annual conference of the Brethren Church caused no disturbance among the ministers or laymen. It was published and approved in the Brethren Evangelist. This was merely saying that if a man is truly saved he will not violate the commandments or the moral precepts. If he does violate the Lord's Commandments or moral precepts he has never been truly saved and is lost.

Moreover, to the average layman there would be little difference between the sinner who lost his salvation because he violated the Lord's Commandments after once being saved, and the sinner who lost his salvation because he transgressed the commandments and because of such transgression was held to have never been truly saved. Whether he arrived at perdition by one course of theological reasoning or by another, would make little difference to the layman, and none to the sinner.

As bearing upon whether this doctrine was essential the statement of Rev. Claude Studebaker, made in an article entitled "Legalism," published in the Brethren Evangelist, December 28, 1935, Exhibit 76-A, attached to Exhibit 76, is as follows:

"(2) Can a man once saved follow Satan and sin to his death?

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This is the old question of the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man.—Calvanism and Arminianism. The five points of the remonstrants and the contra-remonstrants are probably the most concise statements of the two views. The persecution of the Arminians by the Calvinists is not to the credit of the Calvinists, though they became more prominent at the time. *The Brethren church has never made an issue of these theologies*, but has not been Calvinistic as some of the leaders are now teaching."

The second issue raised by the plaintiff as a departure from the fundamental principles of the Brethren Church is Salvation by faith alone, or faith plus nothing. Again turning to the publications of the church prior to the division of 1939 we find in the Brethren Evangelist of July 21, 1934, an article written by Leslie E. Lindower, Th.D. entitled, "Is Baptism in Water Essential to Salvation." In that article he states:

"The writer wishes to state positively that he believes, teaches and practices baptism as it is stated in "The Message of the Brethren Ministry":—"The Christian should observe, as his duty and privilege, the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, among which are (a) Baptism by Triune Immersion. . . ." The question has often been asked, 'Is baptism essential?' Before it can be answered intelligently we must first ask, 'Is it essential for what?' If we mean, 'Is it essential for true and full obedience to our Lord, and hence for complete joy and fruitfulness and reward in the Christian life?' we must answer, 'Yes, most assuredly.' If we mean, 'Is it essential to salvation?' we must answer just as positively, "NO."

This article appeared in the official organ of the Brethren Church. Other articles appeared in the same paper taking the opposite view which leads us to believe it was a matter in which liberty of interpretation was tolerated.

In an article in the Brethren Evangelist, issue December 28, 1935, Defendants' Exhibit 76-A, Rev. Claude Studebaker, one of the witnesses for the plaintiffs wrote:

"(1) Is Baptism Essential to salvation? Probably much of the difference of opinion is a matter of definition rather than belief, however misunderstandings cause grave disturbances. If you mean by ESSENTIAL that no man could be saved without proper Christian baptism then I doubt if there is even one minister in our church who would say, Baptism is absolutely and unqualifiedly essential to salvation."

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Here again the difference seems to be more academic than real. Of course, anyone who believes in an all powerful Supreme Being will concede, as did the plaintiffs, that the Lord can save anyone without baptism, as he did the thief on the cross. The defendants on the stand testified, and I don't believe it is controverted, that they have never taken anyone into the Brethren Church until they were baptized by triune immersion. They further affirmed that baptism was necessary to evidence obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is in harmony with subparagraph 9 of paragraph 3 of the Message of the Brethren Ministry. On their affirmation they further stated that they would never take anyone into the church until they had been baptised by triune immersion.

It is hard to believe a fundamental doctrine of the church was violated here when delegates from the Hagerstown, Pennsylvania, church were seated in the general conference although they had taken members into their church without triune immersion. In the conference minutes of 1956 appears the following statement of the proceedings:

"(1) That members were received into the Hagerstown Church without triune immersion:

Six such members were received between 1952 and 1956, with the approval of the official board. The pastor and official board believed that for reasons of health these people should be exceptions to the practice of the church. It should also be noted that in the past eight years 114 members have been received after triune immersion. First, technically and legalistically speaking, in the absence of any proper provision in the Manual of Procedure for withholding membership in conference because of local congregational practices (Prior to the amendments adopted at this conference), the challenge could not prevail. Secondly, in view of the preponderant majority of accessions after baptism, it is not apparent that there has been any attempt on the part of pastor and congregation to set aside the doctrines and practices of the Brethren Church. Therefore, for these two reasons, it is the opinion of the Committee that the first challenge should be rejected."

It seems the defendants have done better than this in that they have never accepted, and upon their affirmation stated they would never accept anyone into the Brethren Church without

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triune immersion. The Court finds that the defendants have followed the ordinances of the church and the faith as set out in the Message of the Brethren Ministry.

The eventual cleavage in the church relations seems to have been caused by the failure of the Grace group to support the institutions of the Brethren Church, that is, Ashland College, Ashland Seminary and the missionary work. This seems to have been the only ground upon which Dr. McClain and his delegates were excluded from the conference. Dr. McClain was seated as a delegate in the general conference in the years 1937, 1938 and 1939, after the so-called division. He was not seated in 1940. The record of this appears in the Brethren Evangelist, 1940, conference minutes as follows:

"These credentials were not approved by the committee on the ground that they were either out of fellowship with their districts or had publicly declared their opposition to co-operating boards and support of competing institutions."

Dr. George Ronk was asked this question and gave the following answer:

"Q Why do you say they withdrew from the denomination?

A Because they repudiated all the organizations of the church as long established which they had belonged to and which they had attended including the general conference, the district conference, the mission board, the publishing company and every other organization of the church was repudiated and left to one side."

But this was optional with the churches. The record and the history of the church clearly establishes their independence in these matters. They were to be desired but not essentials.

Two cases from foreign jurisdictions have been cited involving the same issues as presented in this case. One is the case of Ashman vs Studebaker (Ind) 56 NE (2) 674. The conclusion arrived at in that case is contrary to this findings and decree. But in that case the local church by its own action deeded the real estate to the State Conference Trustees, "For the purpose of insuring its continued use in the teaching and promulgation of the doctrines and beliefs of the Brethren Church." Further-

more, in October, 1936, the members of the Brethren Church of Peru, needing financial assistance applied to the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church and they agreed to submit to the control of the Board in all matters relating to the affairs of the local church and that the local pastor should be a direct employee of the Board. Under these circumstances that church was operating under a higher ecclesiastical authority. This is not the fact with the Leon Brethren Church. It has forfeited none of its rights to an independent congregational form of government as originally established in its articles of incorporation.

The other case and one that is more nearly in point is that of Russell Kemp, et al, as trustees of the Brethren Church of Dayton, Ohio, vs Oscar Lentz, et al, as trustee of the First Brethren Church of Dayton, Ohio, Ohio App. 68 NE (2) 339. The holding there was that the local church was under a congregational form of government and had a right to withdraw its support from the annual conference.

In the case of Keith vs First Baptist Church of Algona, Iowa, 243 Ia 616; and Ragsdale vs Church of Christ 244 Ia 474, it was held that churches under a congregational form of government could affiliate with any conference of the church, or with no such conference as the majority of the members of the local church chose. In the latter case the Court held that the doctrine of the virgin birth was not so fundamentally different from the belief "That Jesus is the Son of God the Savior" and "That the Bible is the Word of God."

In quoting with approval from the case of Mt. Zion Baptist Church vs Whitmore, 83 Ia 138, 148; 49 NW 81, the Court said:

"Nice distinctions or shades of opinion on doctrinal points or practice do not merit the interference of a Court of Equity, and it is only when the departure from the faith is so substantial as to amount of a diversion of the property from the trust purpose that courts will interfere."

The Court concludes that the Leon Brethren Church is under an independent and congregational form of government; that the defendants are the regularly selected officers and members

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of the Leon Brethren Church; that the defendants have not departed from the fundamental doctrines and beliefs of the Brethren Church; that the Leon Brethren Church represented by the defendants reserved control of its purely spiritual affairs in Article 4 of its Articles of Incorporation; that the Rev. R. R. Robinson is a Brethren minister selected by the officers and members of the Leon Brethren Church; that the equities are with the defendants and that the real and personal property of the Leon Brethren Church is not being diverted to teachings contrary to the established fundamental doctrines of the Brethren Church and the purpose for which said church was organized; that the petition of the plaintiffs should be dismissed.

It is, therefore ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED by the Court that the petition of the plaintiffs be, and it is now and hereby dismissed, and costs are taxed against the plaintiffs.

To all of which the party or parties adversely affected at the time except.

Dated at Creston, Iowa, this 26th day of January, 1957.

(COPY)

H. J. Kittleman

Judge 3rd Judicial District of Iowa

NOTE: The court record found on pages 216 to 229 is printed exactly as presented in the findings and decree of the court. Apparent mistakes are as follows:

- p. 219 ff, l. 18—Claude (Claud).
- p. 221, l. 7.—become (becomes).
- p. 224, l. 2.—Calvanism (Calvinism).
- p. 226, l. 15.—Pennsylvania (Maryland).
- p. 227, l. 33.—this (these).

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